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THE

ISLE OF PALMS



BY

• C. M. NEWELL •



Harold Blanchard.

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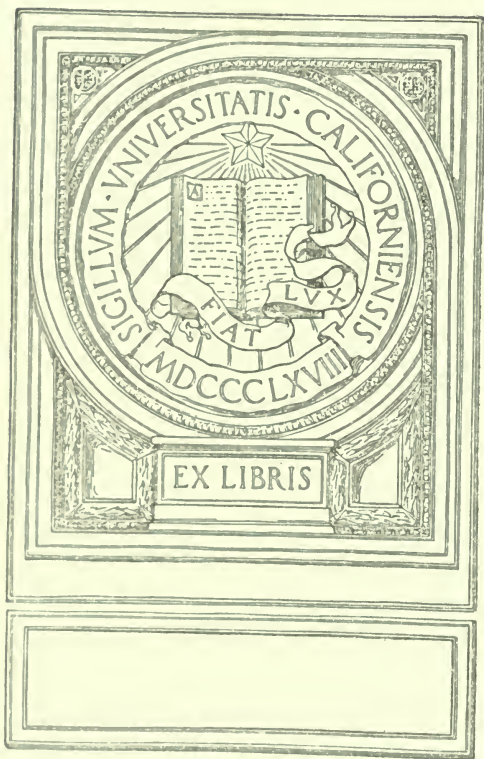
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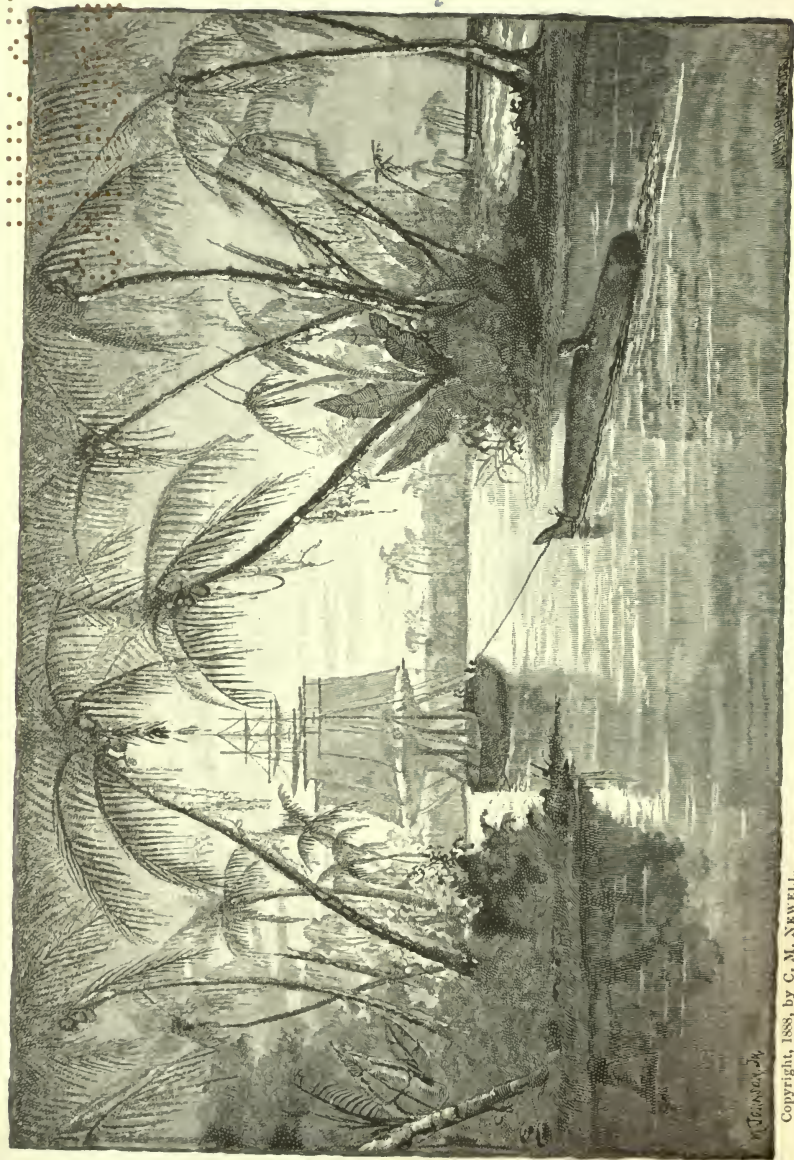
from

Uncle Harry

Christmas, 1888.

Harold Blanchard





THE FLEETWING SERIES

THE ISLE OF PALMS

ADVENTURES WHILE WRECKING FOR GOLD, ENCOUNTER
WITH A MAD WHALE, BATTLE WITH A DEVIL-
FISH, AND CAPTURE OF A MERMAID

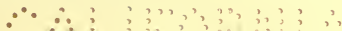
BY

Handwritten: C. M. Newell
C. M. NEWELL

AUTHOR OF "KALANI OF OAHU," "THE VOYAGE OF THE FLEETWING," ETC.

*There are Mermaids in grottoes where the sea-flowers twine,
That are rare in their beauty as the angels divine.
Stealing up from the Ocean they will frolic most free,
When the moon lies sleeping on the murmuring sea.*

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1888.



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1888.

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TO VIRAL
ABSTRACTS

PS2459
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1888
MAIN

INSCRIBED TO ANNIE,

My Beloved Wife:

WHO HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE, BY HER WATCHFUL CARE, FOR ME TO STEAL
AN OCCASIONAL HOUR FROM PROFESSIONAL DUTIES FOR SUCH
RECREATION AS THIS VOLUME DISCLOSES.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE BEAUTIFUL ISLAND.

There's an Isle I love in the Southland seas,
Where the palm waves tall in the trade-wind breeze;
Where the flow'ring vines leap aloft, on high,
Like appealing hands reaching up to the sky.

There, the Sabbath-bells are the golden fruit,
As dumb in their chimes as the silent lute;
There, the orange blossoms their stars unfold,
And the jasmine gleams with its stars of gold.

E'en the sea below, — in its coral caves, —
Has its Mermaids fair in the azure waves;
They sing on the shore to the summer moon,
With the voice of a lute in its sweetest tune.

'Tis an Isle of beauty! Spirits guard the place,
And the wing-breeze of spirits fan the face!
There the sea-worn mariner, — bowed with care, —
Finds an ear-divine to receive his pray'r.

THE ISLE OF PALMS.

CHAPTER I.

THE NIGHT BEFORE SAILING.

THE appointed day of sailing was approaching. With early dawn the clipper-ship "Fleet-wing" would sail under new auspices, — with a new captain and chief officers, — seeking for sperm whales among the coral islands along the Equator. Recruiting at Hong Kong in the spring, thence to the Ochotsk Sea, where she would cruise for "bow-heads" off the Amoor River—the dangerous cruising-ground which she was built to encounter.

During the evening a grand ball had been given on board by the officers, to their shore friends and the officers of the fleet. It was a joyous occasion, and would long be remembered by the residents of Honolulu: an affair made lively with hornpipes and Scotch reels, and perhaps a trifle too hilarious with sea-songs, made boisterous by the rivers of champagne which enlivened the occasion.

Captain Lawrence had been entertained ashore at a sumptuous dinner given by the Talberts, — his old

captain and wife, — at which were the chief merchants of the place and their wives, together with the captains of the several vessels in the harbor. But dinner and dance, like all things else, had at length come to an end, and the people of ship and shore had long since embarked for the land of dreams.

A low-lying western moon was now casting its subdued light over the embowered hamlets of Honolulu. Grim shadows were seen stalking forth over the slumbering land, wherever a breadfruit, a palm, or an algaroba tree intercepted the farewell beams of the departing orb. Even afloat, the shadow-masts of the vessels in the harbor interlaced the unruffled water-space between ships and shore in dark, dismal lines, black as prison bars. The towering battlements of Punch Bowl cast down an ominous gloom over the much-loved valley of Manoa.

The sleeping town lay hushed in a silence that would have been oppressive but for the ever-changing monotony of the surf, breaking on the great barrier-reef, together with the indistinct murmur among the long fronds of the palms, and the distant clang of the waterfalls, heard far up the Nuuanu.

Even the singing lizards had long since ceased their pleasing nocturns, and were now hiding from the coming day in the long feathery foliage of the algaroba and the fruit-bearing papaya trees; not even the baying of a dog could be distinguished of all the countless thousands of yelping curs that peopled the town. The mystic charm of the slum-

berous moonbeam had lulled every breathing creature to sleep.

The land-wind from the mountains had just awakened. An hour since, the half-slumbering baby-airs began to steal timidly out from the cool side ravines, odorous with sandal-wood and other aromatic shrubs; debouching into the Nuuanu, they blended with the rare fragrance distilled from ripened fruits and sweet-scented flowers; together they were lading the full-fledged wind as it meandered, bird-like, down the beautiful valley to the sea. Waolani, and the whole line of other mountain-tops, still lay shrouded in darkness.

It was perhaps an hour before dawn, when the tall gaunt figure of a decrepit man was seen hobbling into the enclosure where stood the astronomical observatory of Honolulu. The limping figure passed directly across the grass-plot, toward the wide covered veranda of a low-roofed cottage; purposely avoiding the winding paths, and keeping in the direction of an open door where Captain Lawrence was sleeping. This strange apparition, coming at such an hour, and whose movements were like those of an assassin stealing upon his victim, might easily lead one to think he was bent on evil.

Such was the belief of the astronomer, who was a timid man, and who now sat trembling with apprehension in his tower above, neglecting to complete his lunar distance, though Venus was travelling in such tempting proximity to the low-lying moon.

Turning an instant in search of some weapon of defence, the alarmed astronomer looked again, and behold, the ungainly object had disappeared as if swallowed up by the darkness. Hearing some untimely noise in the tower, the strange creature had stopped in the dark shadow of the observatory, where he tarried with superstitious alarm, seeking to investigate the groans which he had heard from the upper air.

Just then Captain Lawrence sprang from his bed and came out on the veranda in his night-clothes to observe the weather. He had been awakened by a nightmare, — dreaming that a huge black giant was standing over him, pointing dictatorially to the south, and bidding him, in a ghostly stage-whisper, “Begone!”

“Look out there, Captain! the villain is close around somewhere,” cried out the badly alarmed astronomer, greatly relieved to have a man of known courage come upon the scene.

“Well, Cap’n!” exclaimed another high-keyed voice from out the dark shadow, “de ship am gittin’ under-weigh, an’ dis chile am cum shore arter yo’, sah.”

“Hallo! Flitner, what are you doing up there this time o’ night?—Hallo! Uncle Joe, is that you? Why, it must have been your black ghost that just waked me up.”

“P’haps so, sah.”

“That black rascal has frightened me terribly,

Captain Lawrence. I thought he was bent upon murderous mischief."

"No harm in him, Flitner. He is my third mate. Stir your stumps, and get my chronometer ready in five minutes. Mr. Bailey, come in here, and take a seat, while I dress and pack my valise."

"All rite, Cap'n. Dis chile drestle sorry ter froughten dat measly ole feller up dar in de cross-trees."

"Never mind him, Uncle Joe. Tell me quickly, what other message have you got for my private ear?" he asked, as the veteran whalerman limped up to the veranda and took the proffered seat.

"De bressed Lawd am bin wid us ter-nite, Cap'n. De A'mighty hand bin p'int Joe Bailey de road ter glory. I's bin seed Mocha Dick, Cap'n, way down to'ard Nantucket, and de Pelews, whar dis niggarr bin hab dat fust battle wid dat wicked debbil."

"Sure about its being Mocha Dick?"

"Sartin' sure 'bout dat, sah."

"Was he alone, or with a school, when you saw him?"

"In ar big skule ob cows an' calves, Cap'n. Fust time I's seed 'im off New-Tucket, ar headin' down de Line to'ard de King Mills, sah. Him jes bin kill sum mo' ob de Lawd's chilun."

"Well, Uncle Joe, we will be after him as soon as the wind sets in."

"De wind am pipin' up now, sah."

"Is it? Then I will dress quickly. You may

take my valise down to the boat, and wait for me."

"Don't go off without your chronometer," hailed down the astronomer.

"O no. Bring it out and have it ready for me, Flitner."

"All right. Say, Lawrence, I think there is some good luck in store for your Fleetwing."

"Why so, old man?"

"The moon has got stuck on your ship's weather-vane at the royal truck, and hinders my taking an altitude."

"Is that so? I hope it may prove a good omen."

"T'ank de Lawd fur dat ar moon, sah. We uns am on de road ter glory, Cap'n. Dat's de same sign what de A'mighty p'int out ter dis yere niggas las' nite. Dat feller in de moon wuz jes sot a-straddle ob de r'yal truck, in my wision, sah." And the pious old man turned his one lone eye to heaven full of childish, effusive thankfulness for this singular confirmation of his prophecy.

It was truly said of Joe Bailey, that the only negro about him was "the hide and wool." A black skin without, and a white soul within. Fifty years of rough ocean-life had furrowed the old man's brow, and hideously corrugated his thin visage. Yet this weather-worn aspect had served to impart a look of rough-hewn wisdom to his saintly old face, which all would trust who knew him.

Thus Uncle Joe's present prophecy, disclosing the

whereabouts of the mad-monster that once injured him, would be received with implicit belief. Old as he was, Joe Bailey was still fishy to the back-bone; and as eager to seek out and tackle the fighting whale as when he fought his world-famed battle with him forty years before.

In that dreadful encounter the old whaleman lost his left eye, had both legs and an arm broken, and was picked up for dead, and taken aboard for burial. His being saved so miraculously seemed to be for some good purpose, and the event had been a subject of prayer with him ever since. Nightly the pious old man prayed to the heavenly Father that his life might be spared for the final battle. Old as he was, when about to sail in the Fleetwing, Joe Bailey never for a moment doubted God's oft repeated promise, that in due time, the Christian whaleman and Mad Dick should be pitted in the arena of Death.

As soon as Captain Lawrence could dress, and bid his friends at the cottage good-by, he caught up his chronometer, that Mr. Flitner was waiting to deliver, and hastened down to the wharf. Uncle Joe had got the boat at the wharf-end, and the crew in position, ready for an immediate start. The captain took occasion to privately admonish Mr. Bailey not to disclose to any one on board that the ship was going on a cruise for the "Demon Whale," lest such knowledge should demoralize some of the crew.

CHAPTER II.

SAILING OF THE FLEETWING.

THE day of sailing broke bright and beautiful over the enchanting island of Oahu. The cool crisp land-wind was beginning to strengthen when Captain Lawrence reached the shore. He had left directions the night previous for the mate to have the Fleetwing ready for sailing at the earliest dawn. The ship was now found moored by a bow-fast to the Fort Point buoy; the mate having taken the anchor, warped out to the outer limits of the harbor, and there made sail before the morning wind set down the valley.

While the crew were pulling the captain out to the ship, his numerous shore-friends began to gather about the wharves, shouting their last friendly messages, tipped off with *Aloha!* as he passed. The boat reached the Fleetwing before the pilot arrived, and found the dainty craft tugging away at her fast in the increasing breeze, impatient to be gone.

Captain and Mrs. Talbert came aboard in a shore boat, intending to sail out in the ship as far as the pilot

went, being reluctant to part with their favorite vessel and their young protégé, her much-loved commander. At length the bluff English face of Captain Meek — the pilot — was discovered forcing his way among the noisy swarm of Kanaka boats. Instantly the mate's resounding voice was heard mustering the crew to their stations, ready to trim the yards the moment the shore-fast was let go.

When the pilot climbed aboard, and found all in readiness for sailing, he promptly passed forward his orders to the mate :

“Man the helm ! Cast off the hawser, and trim the yards !”

“Ashore, there ! let go that hawser. Haul aboard ! and coil away,” responded Braybrook, as he set every pair of hands at work.

When the ship was loosed from her bow-fast and had swung to her course, amidst the deafening cheers from the crowd on the wharf, then the first rosy flush of dawn-light was seen crowning the mountains. It was a welcome harbinger to the superstitious seamen, when thus cutting adrift from shore-friends, and about to wander forth upon the pathless waters in search of new adventures.

Captain Lawrence and his Honolulu friends were grouped cosily about the taffrail, looking back with delight at the scene of tropical beauty now opening before them. Beyond the busy harbor and the thronged wharves arose objects of beauty and sublimity never to be forgotten.

Haloed with the crimson dawn, the long line of distant mountain-tops seemed to invite the beholder to explore the Elysium beyond. The frowning Punch Bowl — an extinct volcano — flung down his grim shadow over the newly-awakened town, like the black battle-targe of some mediæval warrior.

See the ever-green valley of Nuuanu, receding from the enraptured eye into dim perspective among the far wooded hills; see it diminish gracefully upward from the blue marge of the sea to the blue gateway in the eastern sky, where the historic Pali — the sad Thermopylæ of the isles — towers above the ever-flowering meads of Koolau.

Behold there the sanctuary of a nation! A rock-built temple filled with the holiest memories of a once brave people — a people now sacrificed to the bane of civilization. There in yon blue gateway fell sweet Liberty and Love. Kalani and his god-given queen died there in each other's arms, on the great battle-field of the nation. A scene so pathetic, that even the Giant victor wept over his conquest, and would that it were not so.

With a bound of delight the sweet-scented wind now came hastening over the sea, filling the sails of the departing ship, and sending her rejoicing on her way. The steel-gray waters of the harbor grew black, as with shadow, over all its glassy surface, and soon rippled into mimic waves that tinkled with childish laughter, as billow and breeze ran frolicking by the Fleetwing's side.

Most grateful, even to these hardy sea-goers, was the delicious aroma of this enchanting land-wind as it came loitering down the Nuuanu, revelling among fruit-laden groves, and gardens of ever-blossoming flowers, stealing their choicest fragrance to dispense to these sea-wanderers with a lavish hand.

Fifteen minutes sufficed for the Fleetwing to run out of the harbor. Luffing out to the eastward of the "Middle Ground," the ship was brought to the wind and hauled aback long enough to let the shore people disembark. When once clear of the pilot's, and other shore boats, the yards were braced forward, the courses let fall, and tacks and sheets were boarded with song and chorus.

The ship was now put upon a course along the land to the east. Keeping just outside of the great rollers that floundered noisily on the coral reef—where it ran parallel to the shore—the Fleetwing soon began to show her best paces in the fast freshening wind.

The morning sun was just bursting over the gold-rimmed mountains, illuminating everything between ship and shore as with a hand of fire. The sun's strong beams reddened the foam on the crest of the combers to the color of blood.

When first these vast upheavals curved upward in thin blue crests—just before breaking into foam—then the sunlight shone through the azure veil in rainbow hues, coloring the dark back of the breakers as with the gore of battle. But when the great

combers rose to their utmost stretch of grandeur, and broke, crumbling with a voice of thunder into flying froth and foam, then the very air was filled with floating bubbles of purple and green and gold; winged creatures that invaded the ship like an army of butterflies.

While the ship was running past the cocoa-nut grove of Waikiki, the long waving fronds of the trees were seen glinted with silver. The nude children were sporting in the bay, frolicsome as porpoises. Sheltered by the trees, the smooth space of water between surf and shore was a steel-gray color, shining bright as a mirror. In this windless water were reflected the dark mountain peaks, the waving tops of the palms, and the few ghostly-white clouds seen breaking away from the upper valleys at this first warm touch of the sun.

Looking away in the offing, the eye found relief from the strong glare of the tropic sun. The blue sea and the indigo sky at the south were so kindred in hue, that only by the faintest film of silver mist could one define the ocean's rim. The ship kept the land aboard until she passed Diamond Head, and then steered away for the south point of Hawaii.

The day continued clear and breezy. The sea was brilliant with brisk blue waves, crested with creamy snow-tops that glistened like diamonds in the sun. The broad arch above was becoming festooned with a white radiance of fleecy clouds, made

lovely by the delicious blue vistas seen here and there in the infrequent rifts.

Dressed in her daintiest bits of finery, the Fleetwing was curvetting as if she felt the importance of her first day at sea. The jaunty little skysail made one laugh to see it pull,—like an urchin with daddy's hat on. The baby-sail tugged away at its sheets as if trying to do the work of a topsail.

After passing Koko Point, the ship took the trade-wind strong, coming down between the islands of Molokai and Oahu; then her course was shaped to go well south of Ranai. The sharply braced yards now had to be checked in sufficient to resist the strain of the fast freshening wind. The bows became wet with spindrift and girdled with rainbows, while the ship's quarter was smothered in sparkling foam, where the great blue waves tumbled home under the counter, beating themselves madly against the shining copper beneath.

Standing in the lee-waist and looking aloft, the great pyramids of canvas leaned dangerously out over the frothy sea, like so many towers of Pisa, while the swift ship bowled along the trades without a wrinkle in the superb contour of her full-drawing sails. The swell of the bellying jibs was like carved ivory, as they bowsed lustily at their slackened sheets, without making the slightest motion in their snowy curves. While the tiny jib-topsail seemed like a spirit sail, vaulting so far ahead, and hung so high in the air; its curves of leech and luff, and the

proud arch of the foot — with the sheet eased off — were verily patterned from the wing of a bird. Perhaps from the great white albatross which kept it company by the hour, conversing with the spirit sail as if it were truly one of its own feathered kin.

Though the wind was beaft the beam, it increased so much toward night that the skysail and jib-topsail had to be furled. A sudden swell now came heaving in from the south, which fretted the mettlesome jade till she champed her bits and pranced about like a war-horse in the presence of battle.

The colliding seas at length dashed so hard against the weather bow, aided by the south swell, that a mighty cloud of spume invaded the forecastle, which appeared more like smoke than spoondrift. It was a pretty delusion, yet, aided by the sunlight, one could easily detect the glitter of the spray, which determined that it was not the kind of smoke one took it for.



2357

CHAPTER III.

DOG-WATCH SCENES.

IT had been agreed between the captain and officers that the boats' crew, as well as the sea-watches, should continue as they were on the previous voyage. Thus, after supper, during the dog-watches, the people of the ship were grouped about their several parts of the deck, enjoying themselves each according to his mental bent or personal characteristics.

On the quarter deck, Captain Lawrence and Dr. Greville were seated by the taffrail, in earnest talk about the adventures of the latter since they parted at the Azores, where the doctor was left by the Fleetwing on her previous voyage, seeking health at the sulphur springs of St. Michael.

Braybrook and Morey—the mate and second mate—had mounted to the cabin-deck, where they were walking and smoking, judiciously laying out some important ship-work in the topmost rigging for the coming day.

Mr. Bailey and Antoine—the third and fourth

officers — were lounging on the booby-hatch, smoking and yarning. Uncle Joe was relating his reminiscences of Honolulu fifty years before, when the Giant King had just come into possession of the group, which had been a matter of contention for centuries. The harbor had been in use but a few years at that time, having been made known and surveyed by one of the North West traders. It had now become the most frequented whaling mart of the world.

The forecastle men were gathered into three characteristic groups. The fore-hatch, and front of the tryworks, were occupied by eight Portuguese, all talking vociferously in their native tongue, arguing the rights and wrongs of the late Dom Miguil war in Portugal.

Sitting about on the knight-heads, and upon the bowsprit-bits, were Tom Crawford, venerable old Buntline, Nantucket Jim, and several other able seamen, together with a number of the best young boys, who had been previously adopted by the veterans. These few superior men were the grandees of the Fleetwing, and constituted the House of Lords in the forecastle.

The second in authority of the forecastle men were lounging on the starboard windlass-end, and sprawled about the newly-washed deck; smoking, gaming, and swearing, being greatly the worse for liquor — not having fully gotten over the last night's dancing and drinking bout.

The chief man of this inferior group—the Speaker of the lower house—was burly Bill Brown, better known as English Bill; surnamed the “Sea Lawyer,” the “Sore Head,”—a desperately quarrelsome fellow. Wishing to make a good show of his social power, Brown’s oligarchy included several negro sailors among his followers, some of whom were good minstrel singers. The numerous black-eyes seen among these swaggering commoners—some of which yet had a pork-rind over one of their binnacle lights—implied that a strong hand would be required, both fore-and-aft, to keep these brawny bruisers in subjection while in harbor, and just after leaving port.

These roistering fellows were now singing a whaling song, and Bill was endeavoring to compel every man—drunk or sober—to join in the chorus, which ran thus:—

“So be cheery, me lads,
Let yer ’earts never fail,
While the bold ’arponier
Am strikin’ ther whale.”

“Hello! there, Corvo, give us ’nother swig at thet bottle,” said Bill, hailing the newly-shipped Portuguese, among the fore-hatch group of third-rate men.

Long Tom’s group of lordly nabobs aspired to be a touch above the vulgar growling gang of Brown’s inebriates, and would only sing sentimental ditties; and these were often improvised to suit the occasion

and the hour. With laudable condescension, Crawford sometimes suffered the black orchestra — the ebony cook and molasses-colored steward — to sit in the adjoining galley with fiddle and tambourine, and join in his refined musicale.

“Come, Cook, heave ahead wid yer fiddle an’ banjo. We uns am goin’ ter pipe up ’bout the shore-gals. Me ole heart has got ar list a-port, to-night, after our long ‘liberty’ ’mong ther pretty Kanakas.”

“All rite, Tom. De steward am jus’ cumin’ forward wid his banjo.”

Presently Tom struck up with an original song, singing in his hoarse, bassoon voice, loud enough to awake the dead. “Tucket, and two other noble fellows, joined lustily in the quartette. Jim had a rare tenor voice that was greatly enjoyed by all, and he was the acknowledged Dibden of the ship. The song was rendered in these select words : —

“There be gals as pink as ther shells o’ ther sea,
There be gals as plump as er duff;
Whatever ther sheer of her ship may be,
All ther gals am lovin’ enough.
So yer see, jolly tars,
You must trim up yer spars,
And be loved in each port by some She-e!
And be loved while in port by some She!”

It will thus be seen that the capacity of a sailor’s heart — just from port — is equal to loving a whole world of petticoats, including the pretty Kanaka

girls, who in those days were often too unconventional to wear a rig of the petticoat sort.

Unfortunately, Tom's extemporaneous song was suddenly cut short by a row about the fore-hatch. Corvo, the newly-shipped Portuguese, had been passing his rum-bottle about too freely — a vile liquor which he had smuggled aboard against the rules — and English Bill had now created a quarrel about the last tippie at the bottle.

Crawford at once assumed responsibility for keeping the peace — as upon the previous voyage. Stepping nimbly down over the windlass, Tom approached the two lusty antagonists, who were delivering rapid blows without order of precedence, and flung them rudely apart, till they staggered against the bulwarks on opposite sides of the deck.

“Go sot down, you Bill. Duz yer wanter make this 'ere drunken Gee think we uns am quarrelsome, 'board o' here?”

“It's ar fair fight we uns wuz 'aving, Tom. So jes mind yer bis'ness.” And Brown rushed frantically to the front again, where the infuriated Corvo was ready to encounter him.

With the grip of a lion Crawford seized each combatant by the nape of the neck and tore them apart, just as they were fairly clenched into each other's hair. The fur flew as if it were a cat fight, for both men held fast to their tonsorial grip, and protested with most disparaging oaths, of as opposite linguistics as the cat's and the parrot's might be.

“What am yer up to, shipmates?” queried the noble lord, as he held the two drunken brutes at the end of his great three-foot arms.

“Leggo me ! Tom Crawford, this ’ere am none o’ yer his’ness,” answered Brown ; with oaths that smelt sulphurous in the evening air.

“What yer foughten ’bout, Bill?”

“Thet ’ere bloody Gee’s bin smuggling rum ’board o’ this old barky, an’ he won’t divide ekally,” said the brave British Jove.

“Where’s yer rum, Portugee?” inquired Tom, meaning to dispense it with a lavish hand to father Neptune.

“None o’ yer his’ness,” was Corvo’s reply. “Leggo me, or I’ll put ar knife in yer carcass.” And the rum-mad fellow whipped out his sheath-knife and made a desperate lunge at Crawford, whose long arms for once saved his life ; for the slashing blade barely reached Tom’s long flowing beard.

Lifting the fellow a yard from the deck, Tom swung Corvo vigorously back against the foremast, till the rib-bones of the Portuguese cracked like broken crockery, and he became limp as a wet rag. Seeing that the man was in no condition to use his knife, Tom dropped him in a crumpled heap on the fore-hatch.

Turning his complete attention to the more burly and pugnacious Englishman, who was still struggling to break away from his jailer, Tom submitted yet one more gentle bit of persuasion :

“Now, Bill, ole shipmate, duz yer wanter quit foughtin’, an’ be civil, or shall ole Tom lay yer out? Like thet ’ere Gee, on ther fo’ hatch.”

And the giant seaman lifted the struggling Britisher high in air, and shook him roughly, preparatory to a gentle swing against the mast, if need be. But Bill Brown’s memory came nimbly to his aid. He at length remembered, through the rum-fog, the dreadful thrashing he had received from Tom on the previous voyage, and now cried out for quarter, and humbly promised to behave.

Just then Braybrook heard of the rumpus, and came hurriedly forward to look into the matter.

“What is going on here, boys?” — and he turned to Tom for an explanation.

“Why, sir, thet ’ere new Gee has broken our rules, an’ bin smuggling rum ’board o’ ther Fleet-wing,” replied Crawford.

“What, you, Corvo. Didn’t I tell you, when you shipped, that liquor was never to be brought aboard?”

“Yes, sir,” faintly replied the Portuguese, who had just rallied from his dazed condition sufficiently to speak.

“Got any more liquor anywhere?” The man sulkily hung his head, and would not reply. The mate turned to two of the other Portuguese with the order :

“Pico, and you, Fayal, go below and bring up this man’s chest. Tom, step down into the forecastle, and see that nothing goes wrong with that chest.”

“Ay, ay, sir. — Come, Pico, heave ahead an’ bowse ’er up. We’ll break cargo in thet feller’s rum-locker.”

When Corvo’s chest was brought on deck, the mate demanded the key of its owner. This was refused. Then Braybrook turned to Tom and bade him break it open. With one adroit kick, the strong seaman sent the chest-cover flying, and disclosed five more bottles of cheap rum.

“Overboard with the stuff, Tom,” ordered the mate. One after another the bottles were flung over the bow, which elicited a groan of regret from English Bill, and a sly remark from Crawford: “Look out fur ar squall, lads, after daddy Neptune has soaked with thet ’ere toddy.”

Corvo’s chest was restored to its place in the fore-castle, and after his berth had been thoroughly searched, the maimed man was taken tenderly below, and Dr. Greville was called to adjust the broken ribs of the badly bruised Portuguese.

It was perhaps an over-severe lesson against rum-drinking and knife-drawing. But the Fleetwing was intended for an orderly ship. And it was just this kind of rough experience, administered by the same bountiful hand, that was required on the previous voyage to convince other unruly Portuguese that daggers, knives and slung-shot, would not be tolerated where noble old Crawford was “Cock o’ the walk.”

CHAPTER IV.

A TROPIC NIGHT.

THE day ended with a beautiful evening. The trades dropped away with the sun, and now a bland tropic air was fanning the ship easily along. Overhead it was clear and cloudless. The stars came twinkling out one by one, until the whole canopy was ablaze with a soft, subdued light. A solemn hush was creeping over the ship and sea that laid hold of every home-loving heart on board.

Dr. Greville and the mate were paired off, walking fore-and-aft on the quarter-deck. The captain had previously separated abruptly from them, and taken his seat in the quarter boat—a hint that he wished to be alone, in silent commune with himself. These self-assertive habits on shipboard are customary with all masters during long voyages, and soon come to be accepted as fixed as the laws of the Medes.

Charles Lawrence was new to the situation, and he had much to contemplate. He might well be proud of commanding such a ship as the Fleetwing.

He was very young to hold such a responsible position. But the *telling* experiences of his life had flowed in upon him as upon few others of his age.

When we remember that the previous voyage had been accomplished within a year, it becomes evident that the Fleetwing's officers had completed a herculean task. Those familiar with the doings of Captain Lawrence, while mate, will confess that he performed more than his portion of the voyage. Yet it was not of his many brave acts, or his rapid advancement to command, that he now stole away to contemplate. His was a mind which grew upon what it daily acquired, and would ever find itself pre-eminent to any subsequent exaltation that might fall to it.

During this pensive starlit gloom, Lawrence's thoughts were not wholly free from sad retrospection. It was an hour when the morbid heart loves to clutch at a by-gone grief, and revel in the passive sorrow it contains. He was now living over every incident of his brief, sad love for Mary Tudor. He found a grim pleasure in conjuring up the shock which her broken troth-pledge had caused him.

Strange that this much honored man should still hold fast to the embittered feeling which that one base act had engendered against all woman-kind. And this, too, in spite of his warm friendship for Mrs. Talbert; his exalted friendship for Asenith Alston; and the delicious, clinging "sisterly" love

of Nellie Lawrence — the brightest and sweetest of her sex.

Until now, Lawrence had not fully formulated his resolutions for the future. In the busy whirl of business and recreation while ashore, this self-willed man had not found time to grapple the future and declare his intentions. But from this hour Charles Lawrence meant to devote himself to making a great voyage. And he was unnecessarily severe, in now declaring that no woman should hereafter come between him and his worldly aspirations.

Having determined that the Fleetwing should henceforth become his best beloved, he now flung off his morbid retrospect — as one discards an ill-fitting garment — and began to watch every movement of his beautiful ship. He soon made himself a part of her simplest evolutions, as she glided swan-like over the bland sea, holding a graceful frolic with the timid wind and the gentle waves.

The unrisen moon had not yet begun to dim the lustre of the companionable stars. It was an hour when the visionary gloom of starlight endows every object on the sea with mystery. When the human heart cowers upon itself for companionship, and woe to the person who has not garnered intelligent resources for such an hour.

To Lawrence's sadly brooding mind — thus shrouded in starlight — the plaintive cooing of the wind among the far upper sails dwelt on his alert ear like the rustling of unseen wings. The gentle

finger-touches of the breeze upon his fevered cheek startled him, as if it were the spirit-touches of a loved hand.

Looking up to the just visible royal, at the main, the gaze need be protracted and intent, ere it could make out the misty sail. When once it was fairly distinguished, then the eye could carry the graceful curves of the canvas wherever it wandered.

Above the royal, the dim tracery of the little skysail could only be determined by its blotting out the twinkling blobs of starlight. It seemed such a ghostly, star-rimmed sail; meet company for the winged spirits of the sky — whose half-seen, half-felt influences ever hover about a ship over all the haunted highways of the ocean.

While sitting thus in the darkness, and gazing long at the vast stretches of hollow canvas above, one easily becomes impressed with the delusion that the ship is sailing away from us, until we become startled with a real apprehension, lest we should be left alone on the dark waters.

Go forward, into the eyes of the vessel, and the delusion is reversed. Stand on the bow, or better still, lie down in the staysail-netting, and a more bewitching phantom is disclosed. The broad swell of the bellying canvas breasts out above, leaning over the dark sea as if the on-coming ship would rush over us if we did not up and away from before her track.

Eight bells were now struck, calling out the first

night-watch to duty. The musical chimes floated merrily aloft, echoing back like a bird-song from out every caverned sail overhead. The tinkling echoes diminished as they rose, till the tiny upper sails sent down but the faintest whisperings of the bell-music that had rung out over the night.

Captain Lawrence's reverie was now disturbed. Suddenly the starlight departed. A flush of light lit up every rope and sail in the ship, and the gilded vane at the truck shone like a hand of fire. The great yellow moon came sauntering slowly up over the eastern sea. It was an indolent orb, and now leaned languidly against a massive cumulus cloud that had long waited her coming. They toyed together like lovers. Sitting there in the orient, seeking a pastime, Cynthia amused herself tinting the fleecy edges of the cloud with green and gold, and jealously blotted out the stars that they could not witness her dalliance.

The wind dropped away till not a breath reached the water. What breeze there was, was aloft; a breath just sufficient to fill the top-gallant-sails and the smaller sails above. Below, the topsails and courses hung lifeless from the yards, sleepy as the slumberous cloud that had locked arms with the lazy moon, and moored ship in the purple sky. Even the sea seemed intent upon a watch below, for not a ripple broke on the mimic waves that purred sleepily against the vessel's side.

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE JOE'S SERMON.

IT was a bright Sabbath morning. The trade-wind had dropped away during the night and left the ship becalmed. The great island of Hawaii was in sight to the N. E., about fifty miles distant. The coast-line was hidden by a shimmering mist of nimbus cloud, while above it rose the vast dome-shaped top of Mauna Loa, towering like a crystal throne in the clear blue air.

A night shower of new-fallen snow imparted a ghostly whiteness to the hoary-headed mountain, which created an impression of supernatural beauty. It was as though some spirit-land—some abode of the gods—were hung up in the blue ether three miles above the sea, where the denizens of another world might look down upon the droning creatures of the earth.

At long intervals, a thin stream of sulphurous smoke gyrated upward from the dazzling snow-crest,—a breath from the slumbering volcano beneath. This baneful vapor climbed four miles

into the windless air, and there massed into a cirrus cloud. Acquiring life from atmospheric influence, the cirrus at length took wing, and sailed away to the N. E., bent upon some intelligent mission to the source of the trade-winds.

Occasionally a soft bronze-colored cloud drifted round the southern rim of the mountain, above the mist, but far beneath the snow-line. Tarrying awhile among the cliffs, as if held by some strong attraction, the cloud at length floated out over the ship, where it hung for hours. When other kindred vapors had joined it, and formed a substantial cloud, then the newly-formed mass would shower down its cool raindrops on the parched deck, and go floating away to the S. W., sprinkling the thirsty coral isles found in its path.

The snow-capped mountain was a beautiful sight to contemplate. An object to lift an intelligent man's thoughts heavenward to his Maker. Yet it was a weird apparition to look upon in a windless day, and it failed not to arouse the superstitions of ignorant seamen. The men were so awed by the sublime beauty hung in mid-air, that they went about nervously whistling for a breeze. These men of iron interpreted the novel sensations which possessed them, as the influence of some dread spirit, feeling about for the sinful man within.

Uncle Joe was perhaps the only person on board who rightly understood Jack's mental trepidations,

and sought to drop a pregnant thought of God, and the hereafter, into his receptive mind.

During the afternoon, with Captain Lawrence's permission, the pious old man gathered the sailors amidship to talk with them about their spiritual welfare. The captain and officers gathered respectfully about the quarter-deck, and set the seamen an example of sobriety by baring their heads during Uncle Joe's earnest exhortation.

Mr. Bailey had discoursed to the sailors on the previous voyage, yet with no regularity. And none knew just why the religious old man was only moved upon special occasions. With a solemn, reverent air, he now stood upon the main hatch and gathered the men about him, and said :

“ Now, chilun, snuggle up close roun' yer ole fader. Gedder 'bout de main hatch, an' let us sing sum ob de butiful songs ob de Lawd. I wanter hab ebbry sailor-man jine in de worship ob de hebenly Fader.

“ 'Member, 'Tom, an' Cook, an' niggas Jim, dat yo' uns mus' hitch on befo'. An' de rest ob de boys am ter tail on arter. So pipe up ! ebbry chile 'mong yer, an' toot yer horns, ef yer can't sing werry much. Now let us sing — ‘ All pull to-gedder, boys, fo' de holy lan'.’ ”

The singing was pretty well managed. The officers joined heartily in it, and one by one every old shellback lent his croaking voice to swell the choir ; until the whole crew seemed to enter soberly into the spirit of worship.

The moral effect of the ebony sermon must be impartially judged by itself. The exhilarating effect of the psalmody so enthused the sable preacher that he now threw off his palmleaf and rolled up his sleeves, as if about to tackle a belligerent whale.

“Now, all yo’ white folks, — wid de niggars hove in, — I’s gwine ter preach ter yer ’bout yer soles. It am de Sabber-day, de Lawd’s holy day, an’ ef de inast-head man doan sing out: Dar she blows! we uns mus’ try ter ke’p it holy. But, chilun, ef de man ’loft raise ’parm whales, den ob course we’ll hab ter lower, an’ tuk em.

“But ’taint ter dose yere week-day pussuns dat I’s gwine ter lecture, it am to de Sabber-day folkes. P’haps yo’ can’t quite sabe, yo’ genlem Jacks, an’ low-down niggars, dat yo’ all am *two* pussuns. Dere’s de week-day sailor, an’ de Sabber-day man, in one pussun. De gude man, an’ de ebil man. De po’ sinful chile dat am bound ter tophet; an’ de Lawd’s chile what may go ter glory — ef him doan cut de pidgicn-wing too much in de sight ob de Lawd.

“So heave ahead! ebbry sinner. Shorten sail! Tack ’bout! Tend de helm, an’ ke’p de ship rite on de lubber-p’int fur glory.

“Now, chilun, I’s wanter signify dat dish chile am two niggars — de Lawd’s brack man, an’ de debble’s niggar. Joe Bailey am two pussuns in one pa’r trowsers. An’ de white folkes am jesso. Yo’ all seed dish yere ole wapple-jawed brack pussun.

Dis am de week-day niggar. Look at dese yere ole crooked walkers, dis po' arm, an' dat port-peeper, what's gawn ter heben.

“ But, brudren, dere's nudder niggar 'sides dis un ; dar's a precious sole in dish chile's in'ards. A lubly *white niggar* ! what am de chile ob de Lawd. So, brudren, all yo' chilun what hab ar white sole in yer bosum shall sum day kneel wid de angils at ter t'rone ob grace. Dat's de kind ob pussun Joe Bailey lubs ter pray wid ! Ter work wid ! An' ter die wid.

“ Dat's de Lawd's chile ! Not dish yere ole cantank'rous brack man, what goes whalin' ter kotch Mocha Dick. De A'mighty am promise dis chile one mo' hack at dat critter ; dat dreffle ole 'parm whale wot staves de boats, an' am leaged wid Satan. Arter dat las' fight, brudders, den both ob dem Joe Baileys am re'dy fo' glory. Den de folks up ter Bedford will clap dere han's fo' one mo' gude niggar, 'sides dat ar ole Jim Crow.

“ So, chilun, it am ter dose yere inner niggars dish chile wanter preach to. I wanter hab yo' sing de praise ob de Lawd in yer hearts ebbry day. Pray when yo' go ter bunk, ebbry watch b'low, fo' all de gude t'ings Gord A'mighty hab gin yer.

“ T'ank de hebenly Fader fo' dis gude ship. Fo' plenty ob lobscouse, an' duff. Dat de hard tack am widout worms, ter wriggle roun' in yer belly. Dat de salt-hoss am not de kind wot de shore folks make de furniture wid. T'ank de great Jehobah fo' de

lots ob whales we boys bin kotch, an’ on’y one po’ sinner bin knocked ter glory.

“Ah! sailor-Jacks, p’raps yo’ hab furgut ’bout dat ar Cap’n Norman, wid de fo’ stoven boats, an’ lots ob de’d sinners.

“How’s dat fo’ high! Am yo’ uns any better dan dose folkes? No sah-e! yo’ am jes ez much sinners az dose yere Albion boys we seed at Fayal; on’y de Lawd looks arter yo’ uns, an’ he jes let dem yere scalawags go ter tophet.

“Hiah! Brace up de yards, all yo’ sinners, an’ make sail fo’ glory. H’ist de Lawd’s cullers at de peak! an’ trim dish fo’ heben; or not one chile ’mong yer shall play de banjo in de holy lan’. Now tote’ long for’ard, ebbry sole ob yer, an’ sing de hallelujer, an’ pray to Gord to hab mercy on yer soles.”

It was indeed a labor of love; and laborious work the sable preacher made of it. While he stood mopping the perspiration from his face, the sailors filed off soberly forward, along each side of the try-works, and grouped about into their usual select social gatherings.

During Uncle Joe’s quaint discourse, the sable face of the preacher had frequently been illumined by a strange unearthly light, which awed and impressed his superstitious audience with evident trembling and fear.

Personally knowing the saintly old man to be a prophet, and believing him to be leagued with super-

natural powers, the seamen readily imbibed his precepts, while they dare not wholly reject his logistics about their probable chance of a cruise in the brimstone sea.

“Look ar ’ere, Tom, what duz yer think ’bout thet ’ere doxology?” asked Buntline, with a tremulous voice, as he hastily took a seat on the top-gallant forecastle beside Crawford—the man he looked to above all others.

“Well, Ben, Uncle Joe am hit it ’bout right in your case. Sorry though, ole shipmate.”

“O don’t, Tom! We uns hev sailed to-gedder too long fur you ter leave me in the lurch, thet way.” And the dismal old shellback groaned with an audible agony.

“Howsumever, thet’s my ’pinion. There’s durned few lambs in this ’ere flock o’ goats, I can tell yer,” continued Tom with great assumption of religious gravity.

“Say, matey, how duz Joe Bailey kno’ ther road ter tophet better than we uns?” And Buntline sprang up and walked the deck athwart-ships, in a truly pitiable state of trepidation.

“I durstn’t tell yer all I kno’ ’bout thet, Ben. But yer see, Uncle Joe got a inside berth forty year ago, when he fit Mad Dick, down off the Pelews. Him an’ ther Lord bin bully friends ever since.”

“I wish we uns mought get ar breeze, an’ skute out o’ this ’ere pesky place.” And Ben began to

whistle vociferously, while casting a nervous side-glance at the weird-looking mountain.

“Yis, old covey, so duz we all,”—and Crawford’s heart began to fail him. He joined his whistle with Buntline’s, and the two worthies walked the deck, squirting tobacco juice with desperate energy, as they turned at the cat-heads, to retrace their steps.

“How is it thet durned sarmon don’t make yer tauten yer lifts an’ braces, Tom?”

“Well, Ben, p’haps I didn’t feel ther toastin’-fork ez much ez yo’ uns, cause I’s better edicated. Edication toughens the hide, yer kno’. But I’ve ’bout calkerlated thet we both on us had better sail a leetle nearer ther wind in futer.”

“By hokey! Why couldn’t yer owned up ’fore, Tom? It’s sum cumfort ter kno’ thet ole Buntline aint ther on’y fellar wid a hogged keel an’ sprung yards.”

CHAPTER VI.

SCUDDING IN A GALE.

WHILE the ship was still lying becalmed on the following day, Uncle Joe detected the first remote evidence of a coming storm. Mr. Bailey's one lone eye was turned heavenward oftener than the two optics of all others on board, and good to the general cause often came out of it in more ways than can be told. Though it was the old man's afternoon watch below, yet he lay smoking on the carpenter's bench, in one of his weird, mystic moods. Captain Lawrence had observed him for an hour past, while walking the quarter-deck, until curiosity was aroused to know the worst.

"Well, what's up, Mr. Bailey; anything good coming?"

"Nuffin gude, sah. Dar's mo' wind cumin' dan we uns wanter tek car' ob," he answered in a drawling voice, like one aroused from a deep sleep.

"What makes you think so?" said the captain, briskly swinging his eyes round the southern and

eastern horizon, without seeing a cloud big as the hand.

“Look up dar, sah. Dem yare mare’s-tails look dreffle pokerish, Cap’n.”

“Goodness! They are switching it off furiously. They are scudding due west. We ought not to have a strong gale here in this latitude.” And the captain, looked to have his comments confirmed.

“De Lawd’s ways am not our ways, Cap’n. Dem scud sez it am gwine ter blow ar gale, sah,” said he with a reproving air.

“Steward!”

“Sir!”

“See how the barometer stands, and set the gauge.”

“Barometer stands at 31, sir. The mercury is a little bellied downward,” replied the steward a moment after.

“Ah! That don’t look like a gale, Uncle Joe,” with an arch look of triumph.

“Joe Bailey doan kno’ ’bout dat ole ’rometer, sah; but dish chile am got de marks ob too many jimmycanes, not ter kno’ de switch ob dose mare’s-tails. It am gwine ter blow like t’under, sah.”

Uncle Joe emptied his short, black, stumpy pipe, hobbled along to the cabin, and turned in. While the captain took a seat by the taffrail and studied the weather. There were a number of high-flying streamers streaking it across the far upper sky. They were long, thin, gauzy-looking shreds of torn

cirrus clouds, scudding with a waving, zigzag motion, verily like the eel-grass in a swift-flowing river.

Against this evidence of a gale, Captain Lawrence argued: that the ship was in the mid-limits of the trades, where a strong gale rarely blows; that the barometer was much too high for a gale at present; while the scud was the probable overflow of some great storm centre far away to the north.

But the trades at length breezed up, the yards were braced, and the ship was brought to her course. The scud soon expended itself, and no more thought was given to Mr. Bailey's predicted storm. Before midnight the wind became strong. Angry clusters of lunar-dogs rimmed the moon about, — a weird gloria of orange and purple rainbows, — sure harbingers of a storm.

During the morning watch the sky became overcast, till the weak, wan light of the moon added greatly to the ghostliness of the sea. Her light was at length wholly blotted out by the low scud sneaking swiftly across the sky, and but for the brilliant flashes of phosphorescence the ship would have been left in darkness.

Throughout the day the ship went racing along at great speed. Toward night the overstrained canvas became a sight to behold, with the low-lying western sun illuminating the bulging swell of her sails. The tough masts were bending a-lee, till the leeward shrouds and backstays swayed loosely with every pitch or roll.

The spanker was proving too much after sail, for the ship not only carried a weather helm, but occasionally took the bit in her teeth, — like a wilful steed, — pirouetting into the wind a point and a half; till the royal masts buckled fearfully, and the flying jib-boom threatened to snap off at the boom-iron.

Captain Lawrence was in the cabin; Braybrook and Bailey were superintending work in the hold; so the helmsman was imprudently left to work his laborious passage at the wheel. 'Tucket, one of the ship's best steersmen, was at the helm; yet under such unequal sail-pressure, no amount of skill at the helm could prevent this occasional send into the wind, a point or two out of the course.

It now became very exciting to watch the brave tussle of the dainty spars, and the baby-sails; but the shrouds and the stays held firm, and the tough sticks kept to their task.

The sea was rising fast, and in the weather lurches and the windward sends the wind whistled merrily aloft, — varying its exciting tones from the shrill fife notes during the lurches to that of the softest flute music of a lovers' serenade, — while the ship sprung her luff and careened to the breeze.

Braybrook came up from the hold in time to save trouble. He discovered the situation, and at once ordered the spanker brailed up, and the mizzen topsail checked in. This took off the ugly gripe on the rudder, relieved the weather helm, and made the ship sail all the faster. Sail was at length reduced,

and the ship ran off with a free wind for hours, until night shut down, dark and dismal.

Captain Lawrence held on to his single reefed topsails too long. The squalls now threatened to rip the masts out when they piped on at their worst. The problem of shortening sail in such a furious gale, is one to appall the boldest seaman. The captain must now elect quickly, either to bring the ship to the wind, or reef down while scudding before the gale. He chose the latter alternative, the toughest and most dangerous task of the two. But he knew that his officers could be trusted in such an emergency, and that the seamen were disciplined to work together with a will.

To suddenly reduce sail too much, while scudding, would incur the risk of being pooped by some of the great following seas. Here was a point which required discriminating judgment, and only the most skilful seaman could accomplish the task.

First of all, the fore and mizzen topsails must be reduced to close reefs, taking the risk of carrying the single reefed main-topsail during the evolution. The advantage of this plan will be seen; the fore-topsail would thus be kept embayed, or becalmed behind the main, while the ship was run dead before the wind. In the meantime the mizzen topsail could be reefed, by bracing sharp up, so as to shiver the weather leech by yawing the ship a trifle from her course.

When these lesser topsails were secured, then came the tug of war. Both watches were required to handle the main-topsail, for the whole force of the gale now had a fair sweep at the sail. The vast square of canvas bellied to the wind with such enormous pressure, that there was danger of springing the yard at the jaws the instant the halyards were slacked, and the strain taken off the braces.

Long Tom, the best man in the ship, had the halyards in hand. Several careful hands, under the eye of an officer, were put upon the lee topsail brace. When all was ready, every man to be spared grappled the reef-tackles, buntlines, and clewlines, and the yard was eased slowly away. The iron parral pressed so hard against the mast, that it required the united strength of the crew to bring the yard steadily down to the cap. Even when the yard was fairly down upon the lifts, and squared by the braces, the reef-tackle men had a hard tussle before the reef-crinkles could be bowsed up two blocks.

Then another kind of fun confronted the reefers. Though the yard was heavily manned, — a man to every two reef-points, — yet in spite of their united efforts, the slatting sail ballooned high above their heads, thrashing and thundering like a thousand demons, unwilling to be enchained.

This emergency required a cunning trick with the helm. Some deck hands sprang to the larboard fore braces and canted the fore-yards, ready for a

yaw ; then the helm was put over a-port, — a half-spoke at a time, — cautiously luffing enough to spill the topsail ; though at the risk of being boarded by a broadside sea.

Then down crashed the iron-bound topsail, at the risk of knocking every man from the yard. Those not too much stunned, seized the reef-points and knotted them hard and fast. Thus one reef was taken. The ship was kept before the wind in the interval of squalls, luffing again when required to spill the ballooned sail for another reef.

It took an hour's hard tussle to accomplish the job. But it was a triumph of seamanship, a mastery of the mad elements such as no other nautical evolution can show. Snugged down to three close-reefed topsails and reefed foresail, it now became a question whether the ship could travel fast enough to escape the following seas.

All eyes now watched the nervous creature with intense excitement, ready to spring into the rigging when the bursting sea-tops came hurtling down upon her quarters ; anxious lest her speed should prove insufficient under such short sail.

When the advanced foot of the vast billows ran under her counter, and flung her stern high in air, then her sails were becalmed by the backward slat, and instant destruction seemed impending over the ship and all on board. But such was the force of the grappling wave that it had the effect to shoot

the on-rushing vessel faster than ever down the long incline of the stupendous billow.

This accelerated speed taxed the helmsman greatly, lest the winged creature should broach-to — one way or the other — as she squirmed about in the unequal toss and tumble of the lesser waves found riding on the backs of the larger billows.

After the ship ran down through the deep, smooth hollow of the vast seas, and her sharp bow rose, pointing to the sky, while she struggled up the watery hill, then she again became embayed for an instant, and appeared irresolute, as if left to the mercy of the coming comber.

But as a soldier climbs the rampart and leaps down among his foes, so the Fleetwing mounted over the stupendous sea-tops, and crashed down amidst the noisy sputter and spume; gladdening all on board, till the crew shouted in wild exultation to see their pet craft run romping among the angry waves, nimble as a deer.

A few hours of such severe tests satisfied all that the mettlesome creature was equal to any emergency. Though the beautiful thing was so sensitive to the touch of wind or wave, yet she minded her helm so readily that a quick, experienced eye could easily conn her, and surmount any danger.

At long intervals throughout this dreadful night, the imprisoned moon would burst forth from some narrow rift in the storm-clouds, casting a brief glimmer over the lashed waters, and a weird glare upon

the sails. Not long at a time would the swift-moving clouds permit the moon to shine, ere she was shut out, and the black night became more dismal than ever.

During these brief intervals, when the moon lit up a long narrow vista on the wild waste of waters, there ever appeared in her shimmering track a vast Shadow-Shape — tall as from sea to sky, and black as the doom of sin. Leaping out of the darkness beyond, this ambushed monster chased the timid moonbeams over the frothy sea, following from billow to billow, and clutching at every ray of light found toying with the playful wave-crests.

With the snap of an angry dragon, this demon of darkness pursued the fleeing light, up over the steep fore-front of the seas and down into the deep dark troughs of the gigantic billows, casting its own raiment of blackness over the lesser shadows found lurking in the embayed hollows. At length it seized upon the last vestige of moonlight and strangled the beautiful gleam in its grasp, blinding all with its hadëan blackness and leaving a feeling akin to horror in place of the moon's ethereal light, ever a solace to the lonely seaman in such an hour.

At such times the helmsman shuddered with renewed superstitions at the ice-cold touch of the Demon Shadow as he passed. Cowering as from an impending blow, with the added ghostliness of the scene, the seaman nervously clutched the spokes of the helm and twirled the wheel with needless vehemence.

mence, lest the scudding ship should also be caught up in the terrifying grip of the Demon Shadow.

When this brief glimpse of moonlight came to enliven the weary watch on the bow, then the sailor's heart leaped with delight, and he burst into song. So long had he vainly peered into the darkness ahead, that he almost lost his own identity in the screech of the wind and the snarl of the sea.

For the first time during the night the bow-watch could now trace out the jib-booms before him ; see the long black guys following down to the spritsail yard, and inboard to the bows. Could distinguish the martingale bury its dolphin-sticker in the seething foam, and see the bobstays thrash the encroaching seas with their rattling links of iron.

Yet when the sailor's song was most joyous, and while his heart was revelling in the smiles of his lassie in the far-away home ; lo, the witching moonbeam was strangled before his very eyes, and he felt the death-grip of the Shadow Demon till it chilled him to the bone.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD BEN BUNTLINE.

[T was an awe-inspiring scene when daylight at length broke over the scudding ship. Her forward deck was a-wash with the oft-invading seas. The furled sails had here and there squirmed out of the gaskets, and blew in tattered rags to the gale. In places, the bulwarks were washed away, the open wash-boards proving insufficient to let out the boarding seas.

The seas were hourly increasing, and now topped up higher than ever. Yet the waves had become more regular, and were easier to contend with than the devious, wobbling billows of the previous night. The force of the gale had strewn the trough of the waves with acres of snowy foam, that looked in the distance like ice-fields, when seen in the deep hollows of the adumbrant seas.

The morning sky hung low and lowering. The storm-clouds had become the color of lead. The scud flew faster than ever; flying so low that it frequently tore its trailing plumage against the trucks

of the swaying masts. All these were ominous signs of further increase of wind; so the life-lines were taughtened fore-and-aft, and extra gaskets put upon all the sails.

Throughout the morning hours the gale increased, blowing with the utmost fury during the squalls. At such times the ends of the main yard were buckled upward by the tugging clews of the topsail, showing the enormous strain of even a reefed sail, while the ship was poised on the top of the careering seas. The mate observed the danger and ordered preventer-braces put to the yards as soon as the squall had passed; though the spar was of good Oregon pine, with a twist in its grain, and wholly free from knots. It had been inured from its youth to buckle to the blasts of Boreas, and should now be toughened to meet the ocean gales.

It was a time when only the best steersmen in the ship could be trusted at the wheel, with a light hand at the lee spokes, and an officer to conn them both. Ben Buntline, the second-best seaman aboard, now had the Fleetwing in hand. Under the heavy, shaggy thatch on old Ben's brick-colored head, there peered two small, keen, observing eyes; having a kindly humorous look that took the fancy of a stranger without further passport.

Blow high or blow low, old Ben was a chap who always kept his home craft on an even keel. Even when in port — where shoal-water abounds — Buntline was wont to carry a light press of sail, with his

anchor ever in the ring-stopper, ready to let go. A man that was never caught floundering in groggy sea-ways, without a light in the binnacle, and a watch on the bow.

Wind and weather had made great havoc with this briny old shellback. The sea-squalls of fifty years had ploughed into his kindly old visage, verily like the attrition of centuries on a mountain side, till Ben's face was the color of leather, and as wrinkled and guttered as the un-pay'd seams of a water-logged hulk.

Ben's hard, horny hands had become claw-shaped, from a life-time of bowsing and hauling on clewlines and buntlines, tacks and sheet. Yet, thick-skinned and hard-headed as he was, Buntline's touch of the helm was as sensitive as the antennæ of a bee on a flower; and with the exception of Tom Crawford, he was the best helmsman in the ship.

One could never tire of the night-yarns of this intelligent old sailor. Yet there was a ghostliness in his deep bass voice that made one cringe and cower, and peer slyly about for spirits and spooks at such times; for the man himself always seemed to feel that he was surrounded by bogies, when at his best story-telling, in the midnight watch.

There were no signs of decrepitude in the vast memory of this weird old Salt. Ben's head seemed stored with countless wrecks and hair-breadth escapes, of himself and others, snugly chocked off

with every kind of silly superstition known to the denizens of the sea.

Buntline was not a garrulous man, as were most of his shipmates. His habits of duty were so conscientious that he was as dumb as the head pump during the day-watches. Nothing short of a storm, or a dark night-watch, could unlock old Ben's vast hoard of sea-stories, — briny yarns, wherein fact and fiction were so blended in woof and warp, that the old hero had long since forgotten which was which. No one could doubt Buntline's originality, for he could not read a line or count a thousand numerals.

This faithful old "sea-dog" was master of every kink and crotchet in seamanship. He could make, mend, or set a sail with the best on board. He could ship or un-ship a mast, whether the spar were the tiny royal-pole or the ponderous main-mast.

It was one of his boasts that he could splice a stranded rope while suspended by it a hundred feet above the deck. And he told the truth. For he would knot a "sheep-shank" in the rope he was told to mend, — including the stranded part, — climb into the bight of the knot, cut the damaged rope above his head, while he hung dangling by it in the air; deliberately stop to renew his quid, and then finish his perilous job as neatly as though done upon the deck.

The ingenuity of this battered old hulk was equal to any occasion. Ben knew just the perilous situa-

tions in which an officer should throw all “upon one cast of the die,” by clubhauling or boxhauling a ship on a lee shore, — even though the clubhaul took the last anchor belonging to the vessel.

The bowlegged old seaman could splinter a broken yard aloft, while it hung by the lifts and braces, in a storm. When his job was completed, Ben would hail the deck to, “Hoist away !” and naively admonish the officer to carry sail on the mended spar hard as he pleased.

True, Ben would spoil a couple of stunsails booms, by splitting them in halves, wherewith to clamp his broken yard ; and would not be satisfied with any but the best rope in the ship, with which to serve his splints. But the awkward fracture would be mended with sufficient neatness to wear into port, if the scrupulous old Tar were granted his way.

Towards noon the sun became strong enough to burn a hole through the tough, torn scud ; scattered the surface mist, blued the purple water, and begemmed the foaming sea-tops with a thousand dancing rainbows. The deck was still awash with water that gushed in at the scuppers, or found entrance through the open wash-boards, and broken places in the bulwarks. The foresail was still drenched, woof and warp, with the wind-blown spray, that occasionally reached the weather clew of the fore-topsail ; for a sharp vessel delights to strike back at every pugnacious wave that attempts to jostle her on the free ocean highway.

The tumult of the gale among the shrouds and stays was still diabolical, often simulating the painful shrieks of a soul in torment; and sometimes mingled with hideous groans as if wrung from the damned: High aloft, the sounds of the wind were less terrifying; though even at the royal-mast head there were sounds from every note in the gamut, from the scream of an eagle to the shriek of a fiddle.

Late in the afternoon the gale abated so that the cook could start a fire in the galley. After a hard tussle, lobscouse and tea were made ready for the sailors, — the first warm meal during the day, — and a more palatable supper was concocted for the cabin. Jack made frolic of climbing the fore-castle steps with tin pot in hand for his pint of tea sweetened with molasses, into which a spray of salt water often got mixed, much to his amusement. While many a mishap of broken crockery and spilt drinkables confronted the steward and cabin boy when serving the evening meal.

A dark nimbus cloud overtook the sun before he set, leaving his lower rim visible just beneath the black mass, creating a most dismal effect. It was as if a funeral pall had suddenly draped the whole canopy of heaven; while ship and sea were bathed in a blood-red flame, as it were a very carnival of gore.

The crests of the angry waves took fire, and flared in the gale lurid as flambeaus; casting a flickering reflection against the sky, and deepening the shadow-gloom in the trough of the roaring seas.

Slowly the ugly rain-cloud was burying the sun before his setting time. One brief moment the red light lingered on the gilded vane at the skysail head, burnishing the unsteady thing with a radiance brighter than gold. Slowly the pall of Night dropped down over the masts and sails; glinted an instant along the tarry shrouds; flung a last rainbow gleam over the sad faces in the lee waist — and was gone.

The very storm seemed hushed and appalled, and the fierce waves cowered like whipped curs, as the black mandate stalked over the deep, terrifying every human heart as if held in the strong grip of Death.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE “ PEQUOD’S ” WHALE FIGHT.

MORE than a week had passed since the Fleetwing experienced the gale. The weather had been fine during the interval, yet not the spout of a whale of any kind had been seen since leaving Honolulu. The ship was now nearing New-Nantucket, a treeless sand island fifteen miles north of the Equator. Captain Lawrence designed to cruise here awhile, hoping school-whales would show themselves during the full moon.

An hour after the mastheads were manned, a sail was raised by the lookouts far away on the weather bow, coming from the direction of Nantucket. It was soon reported that the sail had squared off before the wind, steering so as to intercept the Fleetwing. When this was made known, Captain Lawrence ordered the yards braced sharp up, and bade the helmsman keep the ship close into the wind, — fluttering the weather leaches of the royals, — steering so as to converge upon the stranger’s course.

At the end of an hour the courses were brailed up,

and the main yards hauled aback. The lookouts had discovered that the windward vessel was a whaler, which accounted for her eagerness to "speak" a fresh, new-looking ship just out of port, doubtless hoping to obtain fresh provisions, and a friendly word from the dear home-land.

While waiting for the deep-loaded, snail-creeping ship to come down, it became apparent that she was an old cruiser, a long time out. This was easily determined by her untidy appearance, her rusty bends, the ragged copper, and the long green eel-grass seen clinging to the bottom sheathing, where the copper was gone. The sails were begrimed with the smoke of many boilings. Her topsails were carelessly mended with ungainly shaped patches, as if even old canvas were a scarce article on board.

Every boat on the ship's cranes showed evidence of having been recently stoven. They were badly mended, and puttied and re-painted with unsuitable colors; looking rough and uncouth, though in excellent keeping with the weary old vessel herself. A remarkable contrast to the jaunty appearance of the Fleetwing, with her neat smooth-bottomed boats, white and dainty as if just taken from the boat-builders.

The stranger evidently could not sail more than six knots when at her best; and now, from present appearance, would not out-sail a toad in a tar-pot, and it became tiresome work waiting for her to come down. When she came very near, a rough looking

group of seamen were seen lounging over her bows, and lying in the staysail netting; their garments as much patched as the sails; their shirts and trowsers were adorned with more colors than the rainbow.

Uncle Joe now discovered that it was his old ship "Pequod," of New London, Brown, master; in which he had sailed forty years before. A lucky old ship. Mr. Bailey knew the vessel by many peculiarities of her rig aloft, and the tumble-in, kettle-bottom shape of her hull. It was known that she was nearly four years out, and at last reports had taken three thousand barrels of sperm oil; part of which had been shipped home two years previous, by home-bound whalers.

The "Pequod's" people had no knowledge of the Fleetwing. And there was immense curiosity shown on board of her, to learn where such a rakish looking whaler would hail from. The captain, in her quarter boat, and officers on the fore yard were using their glasses with visible eagerness. Presently her venerable old mate went forward, and was seen thrusting his spyglass over the bow; he soon after spelled out the name "Fleetwing," and ran hastily aft to report to Captain Brown.

In a few minutes the vessel came within hail. Captain Lawrence mounted upon the hurricane house, waiting, by courtesy, to be hailed by Captain Brown, who sat in his quarter boat with a brass trumpet in hand, — the only visible thing which had retained its brightness.

“Who commands the Fleetwing?” hailed Brown.

“Lawrence!”

“Hope you’re very well, Captain Lawrence?”

“Well, thank you. How’s Captain Brown?”

“From fair to middlin’. Got any letters for us?”

“No letters. Come aboard and get some home papers.”

“Thank yer. — Mr. Hanks!” he called to the mate, “luff the critter aback, an’ clear away my boat.”

In a few minutes the Pequod’s boat was lowered, and on her way to the Fleetwing. She ran along-side to leeward, and the boatsteerer flung up his warp. The manropes were held out to Captain Brown. He seized them and climbed up the side, shinned over the monkey rail pretty lively for a man of his age, and there tarried a minute to look about upon the snow-white deck and polished brasswork. His eyes opened wide, and he burst out into a rude guffaw :

“Ha — ha — ha — ! Why, Lawrence, what are yer doin’ here with sich ar dainty lookin’ critter as this? Yer never can catch whales with sich a dandy craft as this ’ere.” And he sprang down off of the rail and shook hands with great eagerness.

“Well, Captain Brown, we are going to try for a voyage.”

The captains had never met before, which was a little odd, as most officers among the twenty thousand whalemén meet in port or at sea many times

over, and many have sailed together in some capacity. Brown knew Captain Talbert; and suddenly he discovered Uncle Joe, who had sailed with him forty years previous, when the great fight took place with Mocha Dick.

“Hullo! Joe Bailey. Don't say you've got yer sea-tacks aboard yet?” And the two veteran whalemen shook hands most heartily.

“O yis, Cap'n Brown. Dis chile am gitten quite young, sah.”

“Haint tackled thet 'ere Devil whale ag'in, hev yer, Joe?”

“No, sah; not yit. But we uns hope ter find 'im befo' we kick de bucket.”

“Well, Joe, I wish ter goodness yer might find 'im, if yer wanten. We've just had two boats stoven all ter smash, an' four men killed, by a thunderin' big whale, with two foot of his jaw-end crooked over ter starboard.”

“Dat's Mocha Dick, sah! Sure pop, Cap'n Brown. Dat's de ole critter what we uns tackled forty year 'go, sah.”

“Guess not, Bailey. That whale had no crook in his jaw.”

“It am de same ole debble, sah. He broke de jaw bitin' inter de “Ann Alexander,” arter he stove 'er. Whar's he tuck hisself to now, sah?” and the old hero became wild with excitement.

“Headed off down ther Line, in a big school o' cows and calves, with one of our lines fast to him.

Durn it, Joe! you act as if yer'd like ter tackle 'im ag'in. But nary a boat o' mine shall ever lower for that infernal beast. Why, man, he's full of ar thousand devils, an' came near stavin' the old Pequod; — an' where'd my bread-an'-butter bin? I tell yer, Bailey, there aint ar whaleman living can kill thet ugly cuss!"

"Joe Bailey am de niggas dat wanten try once mo', sah. De Lawd am promis dis ehile one mo' hack at dat ole Debbles Whale."

"Spunky as ever, Joe. But I tell yer ter keep clear o' thet beast, or you're ar dead man." And Brown turned abruptly away, a little roiled at his old shipmate's persistence.

"How's everything up to Bedford, Captain Lawrence? The Acushnet haint tuck fire yit, has it?"

"Not yet. Waiting for your big voyage to arrive home, before they apply the torch."

"What was ile wuth, when you sailed?"

"About a dollar and seventy cents a gallon."

"Goodness! Gone up, ha? Thank fortin for that streak o' luck."

And thus the two men chatted through the day. When they came to part, after supper, Lawrence asked Captain Brown what port he should make next; and was told that he was about leaving for Honolulu, but would now wait a week and cruise with the Fleetwing. To this, Captain Lawrence at once objected, saying that Brown's recent encounter with the mad whale would not make the

Pequod's crew good company for the Fleetwing's men. So they agreed not to meet again.

Braybrook and his larboard boat's crew spent the day aboard the Pequod, and came back greatly disgusted with all they saw, especially with the food they had been compelled to eat while away. The so called coffee that was served at supper, instead of tea, was made from mouldy corn brought from home four years before, to feed pigs on.

The ship's bread was amusingly described by Buntline.

"Cur'ous stuff, matey. That 'ere hard tack wuz colonized wid weavils an' long white worms, big 'nough to catch a albicore wid. Why, lads, them durned biscuit wuz runnin' round ther fo'castle, like ar lot o' creepin' turtles. Kind o' handy stuff though. It had got so familiar wid de crew thet it allers cum at their call, when hungry; sort o' impatient like to get housed in ther stomach of sum nice sailor Jack. Cur'ous provender, that 'ere New London bread."

The description of the Pequod's terrible fight with Mocha Dick, had the effect to horrify the crew of the Fleetwing, and greatly cooled the ardor of the officers for a tussle of that kind; all but Uncle Joe, who was made more fierce than ever. For days after many of the crew were completely panic-stricken at the thought of meeting such a murderous monster as had been described.

At the first moment's interview Bailey could ob-

tain he urged the captain to keep the ship down the Line in search of Mad Dick. The fearless old whaler was beside himself to have a fight with the mad monster, which was yearly committing such depredations among the ships and boats of the whole fleet.

For the first time, Mr. Bailey now disclosed to the captain that this tragic event of the *Pequod's* was a part of his whale-vision at Honolulu. In fact, this very death struggle with Mocha Dick was taking place at the instant Uncle Joe's prophecy was made clear to his mind, in the far-away island of Oahu.

In reply, Captain Lawrence explained to his inspired old officer that the seamen had become so badly affected by the sad occurrence that the true policy would be to drop all talk about the affair, and to cruise quietly hereabout for a week, until the terrorized crew could partly outlive the recent horror.

The captain further confessed to Mr. Bailey that he would himself like to be well quit of this whole business. That he had compelled Brown to make choice of some opposite direction in which to cruise, so that the ships were separated beyond all chance of meeting.

The next afternoon Nantucket was raised from the masthead. The ship was run close in under the lee of the barren sand island, the main yards laid aback, and two boats were lowered away and sent ashore.

Braybrook and Morey understood that they went in ostensibly to gather birds' eggs and catch turtle,

but in reality they went to make a little diversion for the men, hoping to somewhat abate the demoralized effect of the Pequod's whale fight.

On the succeeding day, after cruising about till noon, two other boats were permitted to go ashore for an afternoon, tramping about to catch birds and turtles, and bathing in the gentle surf on the windward shore.

CHAPTER IX.

BATTLE OF THE SEA-MONSTERS.

ABOUT a week after parting with the *Pequod*, a most singular and frightful affair occurred on Nantucket. The event had the effect, in spite of all Captain Lawrence's previous precautions, to add greatly to the demoralized condition of the crew, — something that could never be obliterated from the mind in a lifetime.

The *Fleetwing* had been standing off-and-on as usual to the south of the island, through the early part of the night. About midnight, during the dense darkness before moon-rise, while the ship was very near in to the shore, and about tacking off, suddenly a tremendous uproar took place on the sand-spit, that alarmed every soul on board. A terrific battle was being fought between some vast monsters of the deep. So terrifying was the noise, that it seemed as if all the foul demons of the nether world had crawled forth from the sea to re-possession themselves of the earth.

The frequent pauses in the fight were only a little

less appalling than the battle. The savage growls and labored breathing of some deep-voiced creature, were responded to by the hissing, clucking noise of another monster. Prelusive bickerings, preparatory to the fierce conflict that soon began in earnest, which was accompanied by the most unearthly outcries that ever invaded the human ear. A mingling of shrieks, snarlings, and bellowings similar to that of a goaded bull; added to which were the screams of the vast cloud of sea-birds that hovered over the combatants. The sandy hides of the beasts grated like two millstones, while their rough bodies rasped against each other during the deadly clench.

Though it was clear starlight, and so still that every movement on the sand could be distinctly heard, nothing but an indefinite outline of the combatants could be seen. Occasionally a monstrous creature raised himself fifty feet into the air, blotting out the lowdown starlight by a body big as the mizzen topsail, and shaped liked a vast spider, lifted on numerous legs large as a topmast.

While visible, this beast was very active, keeping up a clawing, swaying, pecking motion; supplemented by a pawing movement, like that of an enraged bull, sending cartloads of loose sand and shell into the air, which fell in showers that rattled like hail stones. After uprearing a few minutes in this manner, the gigantic beast would quickly squat back to the level of the sand dunes and disappear.

The opposing fiend, one or more, — for at times there seemed to be many, — was very differently formed from his antagonist; looming in the deceptive starlight like a many-headed serpent, with a vast body large as the mainmast. This writhing, contorting creature closely followed every moment of his foe; swaying backward and forward, ducking low down, or rearing high above his antagonist, till at length the two grappled in a long close conflict, which was renewed again and again. This would end by their falling flat on the sand, breathing with a loud, harsh, suffocating sound while they lay clenched in a deadly grapple.

At length, after an hour and a half of such contention, the strength of the contestants waned, and the battle gradually receded toward the opposite shore, until the splashing water showed that the retreating beasts had gone off fighting into the sea.

Every soul in the ship was on deck, or in the rigging, during the hideous wrangling of these monstrosities of the sea; and an indefinable terror possessed every one on board. It was a truly terrifying, ghostly event, which could not fail to greatly intensify the previous superstitions of the crew.

Without waiting for daylight the ship was kept away before the wind, in the direction of the King Mills group. Captain Lawrence concluded that of two evils he would choose the least. The Mocha Dick scare was bad enough, but this last affair was

worse, and the vicinity of Nantucket must ever remain a bogy place for the Fleetwing's crew.

The croakers of the forecastle had an unfailing subject for future debates, and many were the ridiculous opinions expressed about the personality and habitat of the Nantucket demons. A majority of the worst element, with English Bill at their head, were outspoken in their belief that the whole affair arose out of Joe Bailey's sermon, — Bill's animosity for the man leading him to deem preaching against Satan a most unsuitable subject for sea-going people, Jack being in such easy reach of the devil.

Even Buntline conformed to the prevailing opinion that it was not safe for sailors to speak disrespectfully of any evil spirits, while afloat, as they were so sure to retaliate. Tom's thoughts were probably groping about among the same category of ideas; but the brave fellow had a noble habit of subordinating his own superstitions, and arguing among the sailors from the stand-point which he knew Captain Lawrence would approve of, in any matter that transpired on board. So he sternly interposed his views in this case : —

“Avast ther, Bill Brown! Belay thet 'ere British gawspel wid ar round-turn. You bin argufyin' to them durned spoonies 'bout spooks an' bogies jist long 'nough.”

“Duz yer mean ter sez, Tom, thet them 'ere foughtin' cusses wan't Devils from 'ell?”

“Sposin' they wuz, jist fur argufication. Don't

yer kno', Bill, thet if them foughtin' beastes *wuz* ther head devil, an' all his lollypop critters, frum tophet, thet our ole Uncle Joe am 'nough fur um?"

"How duz yer make thet out?" ventured Bill.

"Why, ain't it one o' ther ten comman'ments, 'Satan abhors holy water'? An' now, Bill, don't yer see thet ar good sarmon frum Uncle Joe am ther best safeguard fur the Fleetwing's boys?"

"O Tom!" interposed Buntline, aghast with fear. "Don't yer go ter speakin' up loud, thet way, agin ole Nick, nor any o' his 'spectable peoples." Ben never assumed quite the courage to speak of Satan in any but a pleasantly modified term, after the mock evangelical methods.

"Shut up, Ben. Nuther you nor Bill am edicated fellers, an' can't be 'spected ter argufy 'bout gawspel matters. Didn't cap'n sez ter me, ther last trick at ther wheel, 'Tom,'—sez 'e—'don't yer let ther boys take any foolish idee 'bout thet boggy affair on ther Island.' So yer see, maties, it am jess foolish ter be argufyin' so much 'bout it."

Late one afternoon at the end of the week, the tree-tops on Woodle island, one of the King Mills group, were seen emerging above the sea-tops. When the ship approached the low-lying island, hundreds of overjoyed natives were seen running toward the south shore to launch their canoes to be in readiness to paddle alongside when the vessel arrived. Children were gathering shells, women were catching fowl and small pigs, and boys were

climbing palm-trees for cocoa-nuts,—all of which were ever found available to barter with ships for cheap calico, tobacco, knives and fish-hooks.

The Fleetwing ran close in to the coral beach, where the white reef is as bold to approach as the wharves of a seaport. It was not Captain Lawrence's intention to remain long among this group. He stopped chiefly to inquire about whales, as school-whales were sometimes found plentiful close along the shores of these squid-breeding islands. When the ship came within hail, the natives began to shout lustily: "Big whale! Big whale!"

This intelligence led Captain Lawrence to luff off shore with head yards aback, and let the natives come aboard to tell the news, and trade all they had to dispose of,—as young pigs and spring chickens are ever welcome to a ship's larder.

While the natives were trading, the officers learned from reliable chiefs that about a week before a great many cows and calves passed close along-shore, followed the next day by a monstrous bull whale. Further questioning showed that the whale had several irons in him, a long whale-line, and the frayed end of a shorter line. Both the school-whales and the lone bull were heading along the Equator to the west. This stirring news led the captain to send away the Kanakas and keep the ship on her course.

During the week following, the wind held light and steady, and the weather remained mild and clear. The course was varied, that the ship might pass close

to Atlantic island, where the natives reported that for two days, during the past week, the island had been surrounded by sperm whales.

Steering on a W. N. W. course for five days, the Fleetwing ran among a cluster of coral reefs, in every stage of formation; with an occasional small uninhabited island, only a few feet above sea-level, yet abounding with fruitful shrubs and cocoa-nut trees. No one on board, but Uncle Joe, had ever cruised here before. It was a vast nest of unknown dangers, which even the best Admiralty charts described as: "Reefs hereabout."

For many days the ship carefully worked her way through the countless reefs and chartless isles. Here man can most readily comprehend how young Creation first rose in primal beauty to joy the Maker's soul. It was a fresh-born, unpeopled world, new-grown with fruit-bearing trees and flowers; where even the land-birds seemed new-created for the unsullied isles, for they were timidless, and tame as in the Eden days, fearlessly seeking companionship with man.

There is an eloquence in the vast solitude of such an unknown sea which the restless cosmopolitan may not comprehend; but when such an expanse of trackless ocean is found embellished with young primeval worlds, untrammelled by the hand of man, the softened heart of the new-comer prompts him to reverently bare the head, and stand humbled and abased in the presence of God's handiwork.

Here man finds himself wishing that he might be recast — reannealed of his human dross — and left pure and perfect to populate the new-found isles, that their ever-green glades might some day echo to the song and prayer of purity and peace, — no impossible Utopia, as witness Pitcairn's Pirate Isle.

After the Fleetwing cleared the first group of reefs, she stretched out into a clearer sea, in the direction of more scattered islands. It was one of those perfect, cloudless days only known in the mid-most Pacific. The atmosphere was so clear that not a shimmer of haze blurred the clear-cut horizon. The blended azure of sea and sky was of such kindred color that the keenest eye could not detect where ended the one, or began the other.

So deeply blue was the ocean that neither a skip-jack nor a dolphin could leap from the water in chase of the flying-fish, but their little splash of foam was instantly detected by the watchful look-outs at the mastheads.

Even an albatross, miles away, too far off for human eye to distinguish his brown back when flying, would be seen at once if he chanced to turn his white belly to the sun; for the least speck of white against the blue background attracted instant attention.

At length this glorious tropic day went down. The glowing west shut out the fiery sun with bars of molten gold, disclosing to admiring eyes a sea of crimson cloud-islands — beautiful as the Elysian dream-land of our dreams. Then the brief twilight

came, with its shimmer of purple gauze, and soon a veil of gossamer was dropped down over the scene, and the cooing trades hushed their lullaby into the softest breathings, still fragrant with the perfumes of the Windward Isles, where the birds were now twittering their vespers unto the stars which glittered in the sky, awaiting the coming of the summer moon.

CHAPTER X.

CRUISING FOR MOCHA DICK.

FOR the first time since leaving the Sandwich Islands the Fleetwing now shortened sail, and lay-to for the night. The ship had arrived upon the whale-ground secretly designated by Uncle Joe before leaving Honolulu. During most of the passage down the Equator the weird old prophet had been humorous and cheerful as ever; but for several days past the pious old whaleman had been less loquacious and more prayerful than usual. He seemed disposed not to be communicative with any one but Captain Lawrence, who was the only person in his confidence, as to the whereabouts of Mocha Dick.

The history of the old veteran was known in every whaling port, yet such is the superstition of seafaring people, that hundreds of officers and seamen had refused to embark on the same vessel with this most exemplary of men. So wonderful and well attested had been his prophecies about whales, that his illiterate class feared he was in league with

Satan, and looked upon him with awe and apprehension.

The tragic story of Joe Bailey's terrible whale-fight, forty years before, was the frequent theme of every whaler's fore-castle. All on board the Fleet-wing knew also that Bailey shipped, on every vessel in which he sailed, with the special mission of hunting the mad whale. Though he had never yet found him, he had frequently been close upon his track, — as in the case of the *Pequod's* encounter, — and he had always proved a most fortunate accession on all previous voyages.

In the former savage encounter with the mad monster Uncle Joe became so dreadfully crippled in legs, arms and eye, that he bore about him an ever-present reminder of the solemn vow then made: To follow upon Mocha's track so long as he could pull an oar, or dart a lance.

Or to give the vow as it was probably recorded above: "O Lawd! 'scuse dis wicked niggas fur all de past cussedness. An', hebenly Fader, lemme foller on de track ob dat ar Mocha Dick, long ez dish chile can pull de oar, an' dart de lance."

According to Bailey's own account of those long-gone days he was then a reckless, wicked man, only tolerated among whalers because he could dart farther, and kill more whales, than any other man in the fleet. He declared that his first knowledge of God, heaven and the angels came to him in the glorious trance-like dream, while he was floating

about, apparently dead, in a snarl of whale-line, broken oars and paddles.

Several of his crew were killed, and had sunk, or been eaten by sharks ; and not until the two wounded survivors and most of the boat gear had been picked up, did the rescuers deign to drag aboard the "de'd nigger," for the humane purpose of burial. As the old man quaintly expressed it in his negro lingo : "Dat's de time Mocha Dick done kill de wicked nigger wot wuz in dish chile in dose days. But, sah, dis yere brack man am de Lawd's nigger, wot den tuck de place ob dat ar udder miser'ble Sambo."

Though the Fleetwing's crew were not aware that they were now approaching the very spot where Bailey once tackled the monster whale, yet there was a current report drifting about the ship that the old prophet had promised that whales should soon be seen. This prophecy was further borne out, to their apprehension, by Uncle Joe's brooding, trance-like appearance during the past week ; times when the most superstitious of the crew dare not approach the old wizard.

In the old man's talk during the last dog-watch, he had plainly said to his Portuguese boat steerer : "Darfore, if dis chile am rite, brudder Jose, de 'parm whales will pop up, 'fore long, 'bout 'ere sum-whar. So yo' uns mus' pray de Lawd ter hold us in de holler ob de hand, when yo' go ter bunk. 'Cause yoz ar awful wicked sinner, Jose Verd."

Such was the force and solemnity of this injunction that the huge barbarian fell to counting his beads with unusual alacrity, though the reproach had been dinned in his ears a hundred times during the previous voyage. Jose was a fierce, brutal man, yet he held his old boat header in the utmost veneration and fear, fully believing that he was a proselyte of Satan, and could influence the devil to destroy whomsoever he would.

When Mr. Bailey was questioned as to the likelihood of such a man as Jose ever being redeemed, his reply showed the humanity of the dear old soul: "Yis, sah! hope ob dat niggarr yit. 'Dough Jose's heart am brack ez brudder Cain's, dat ar po' chile hab got ar shinin' sole down in de gizzard sumwhar. Bimeby Gord A'mighty will fish it up, an' snake brudder Jo' inter glory!"

To Uncle Joe's more intelligent and well meaning shipmates there was something very exemplary in these Christian precepts. He was therefore greatly commiserated for his deformity, loved for his simple, trustful piety, and respected for his marvellous prophetic wisdom, — characteristics which appalled the superstitious crew.

During the previous day the captain had been requested to draft the old man's will, disposing of his effects on board, and the snug little sum that had been shipped home in the ship "Nellie Lawrence," at Honolulu. Knowing of no living relatives, the old hero had bequeathed most of his property to

charitable institutions favoring his race. He had given Captain Lawrence his sea-charts, and quaint old journals about whales and their cruising grounds — most valuable records of their kind.

Captain Lawrence became greatly attached to his old officer during the previous voyage; while Braybrook and Morey, men not favorably impressed by any one's piety, always ridiculed Bailey's power of second-sight. Consequently, not being able to confide Uncle Joe's sayings and doings to his officers, Captain Lawrence continued to withhold all knowledge of the supposed proximity of Mocha Dick. And for the further reason that many of the men, and one of the inferior officers, would become panic-stricken by the news.

When Mr. Bailey gave directions about his will, he firmly expressed an all-pervading certainty of his own death, together with that of several others. So that the captain himself could not help being greatly depressed by the solemn event, feeling as if the grip of doom had fastened upon them all.

The whale-ground on which the Fleetwing was to cruise was remote from the marts of commerce, unfrequented by merchant vessels, and but rarely visited by whalers. It was in the extreme southern track of the old Spanish galleons, in the far-gone centuries.

During the winter months the rich argosies of those days came well south, when making passage from Acapulco to Manila, on account of the strong

trades, vainly hoping to escape the terrible typhoons, — far-reaching hurricanes, induced by the semi-yearly changes of monsoons in the Indian and China seas.

This lonely sea was a prolific nursery for coral reefs and small, newly-clad islands, found in all stages of growth, — from little isles with a single cocoa-nut tree to islands overgrown with the foliage of every tropic fruit and flower.

Fortunately the usual weather hereabout is mild. By the aid of moonlight, and with constant watchfulness, a ship can avoid getting entangled among the countless reefs — whether submerged, just a-wash, or emerging into little snow-white islets.

There is one other element of danger that induces whalers to avoid the place. An ugly equatorial current is found setting toward the Suloo sea, varying in its velocity, and most changeable in its direction — being constantly influenced by the moon-phases and the changing seasons.

As the wind on the Equator usually takes its direction from the prevailing currents — changing with every deviation of the current — it follows that a great variety of drift-seeds, and many rooted plants, float on the varying wind and water from far-away islands to these emerging reefs. This, together with that brought by migrating land-birds, — which always fly with the wind, — soon creates a dense tropical growth on these new-born islands.

The captain had given orders to keep the ship

tack-and-tack through the night. The western current made it imprudent to lay aback, as the ship needed to be kept in motion to retain steerage-way, and be under command when approaching the reefs. Even then it required the utmost vigilance, as the white coral simulated the moonbeam so that the difference could not be determined until quite near.

Though the first day's cruising had passed without seeing sperm whales, yet numerous favorable indications were everywhere observed. Albicore and skipjack crowded about the ship in countless numbers, and were easily tempted by a bare hook and a white rag. Sea-turtle were also plentiful, and a number had been caught by lowering the boats and darting a lance through their shells, to hold them while they were secured for hoisting aboard.

It was calculated that the moon would full a little after midnight. Her declination compared very nearly with the ship's present latitude, which would bring the lunar-orb directly in the zenith at night-meridian. Furthermore, as the perigee also coincided with the moon's maturity, it followed that her most potential influence now predominated. This must impart renewed energy to every living thing, especially to fish-life and flesh-creatures of the teeming waters.

It was a favorite theorem of Mr. Bailey's whaleology, that cachalots hibernated at the bottom of the ocean during the quarters of the moon; there gorging themselves with the juicy flesh of the squid, — a

cumbrous mass of inanimate fish-life, often found many times larger than the whales themselves.

But when the magnetic influence of the full-grown moon quickens the gorged whales into life again, then up they come to the surface, breaching and spouting, frolicsome as lambs, and fatted to the best condition in which they are found. This theory is still maintained by some of the most sagacious whalemens of the fleet.

As the midnight hour approached, the brilliant moon crept up her glowing path of stars and crowned the heavens in the fullness of her night; calling up the slumbering tides in her train, and flooding the placid sea with radiance brighter than a thousand diadems. It was indeed a wondrous sight to behold the glittering crests of the little wavelets as they rose into something more than ripples, aping their more noble fellows of a rougher sea for an instant, and then crumbled back into the golden effulgence beneath the moonbeams.

Mr. Morey, the second mate, had charge of the middle watch. So far the night had been uneventful, with the exception of seeing many indications of whales, and nearly running upon a coral reef, which lay just a-wash in the moonglade. As eight bells drew near—the three o'clock termination of the watch—Morey quietly entered the cabin to make a record of his watch upon the log-slate. It was a routine duty of the night-watch, but never had the task been executed with such gentle precau-

tion as now. Every act of this brusque officer became subdued and reverential. When he entered the cabin he stopped abruptly, like one awed and agitated by some supernatural appearance. He had heard a low, pleading voice calling upon the Heavenly Father in behalf of his sinful shipmates :

“ A'mighty Fader ! ke'p wid all dese prec'us children when Joe Bailey am gone ter glory. Be wid dem allurs, deah Lawd, when I's heah no mo' ter ax yer 'board. Bress de gude Fleetwing, an' de deah Cap'n ! Furgiv Misser Braybruc, an' brudder Morey, dat dey will not becum' sweet lambs ob Jesus. O, dat dey would lub dy holy name, an' walk in de lite ob dy presence.

“ Spare dese po' sinners, bressed Fader, fo' dey duzn't kno' dat dey stan', at dis moment, in de shadder ob Death. Let up on dem, deah Lawd ; give dem one mo' chance fo' glory. A'mighty Gord ! promis' dis yere po' ole niggars dish one t'ing, fo' Jesus' sake.

“ Now, Lawd, lemme go forth ter de battle, an' fought dat ole critter — de crownin' toil ob my life befo' I go. Den lemme depart fo' glory, sartin' dat de deah bosum ob Jesus 'waits dis niggars up aloft, in de manshuns 'bove. Amen ! Glory to de Fader.”

With an unsteady hand, Mr. Morey wrote upon the log-slate : — “ Fine, clear moonlight. More breeze coming, as the stars grow brighter. The moon seems very bright, and much nearer than usual.

Her influence is penetrating and powerful, and has drawn the face of one of the deck-sleepers into great contortions. Poor Billy! We gave him the lead of a pencil to chew, the only known remedy. The flesh of the dead albicores hanging in the moonlight quivers as if alive. Ordered all the fish thrown overboard, in fear of being poisoned.

“At 12 o'clock M. we passed a small coral island, with the sea just a-wash on most of it. It was white as a snow-drift, and we took it for moonlight till close aboard. Its only green thing was one low cocoa-nut tree. The current is quickening since the moon passed meridian. The sea is full of shoals of fish coming from off shore. At 2 A.M. a school of large blackfish came round the ship. There is now a smell of sperm whales all about us; think we are passing through whale-glips.* So ends the middle watch. Wind E. S. E.”

This was all matter-of-fact night work. But the great splashes of hot tear-drops falling upon the log-slate were something never before found blurring the record of the Fleetwing. That pleading voice of prayer in Uncle Joe's stateroom had awakened the “still small voice” in the worldly heart of the second mate.

The clock was about striking three, when the watch would be changed. As Morey rose from the log-slate he tarried before the time-piece, and after

* The odor a whale leaves on the water to indicate its presence to other whales. A habit of many land animals.

a moment's hesitation swung the hands back half an hour on the dial, and went softly out on deck, instead of calling out the starboard watch, as he had designed.

If this sinful man could not pray himself, he could prolong the watch of a white-souled brother that would pray for him. It was the first imprint of divine footsteps visible in the worldly heart of a brave officer, that time could not efface. Before this never-to-be-forgotten day was ended, the salutary impressions of the night were deepened into convictions that, inasmuch as he had prolonged the hour of prayer for a Christian brother, he had prolonged the number of his own days upon the sea. Morey was a better man from that hour, to the last day of his life.

When at length eight bells rang out its peals over the glowing waters, the morning watch was called, and the third mate came out and took charge of the deck. As Morey passed the orders of the night to Uncle Joe, he noticed the salt tracks of tears crystallized on the sable cheeks of the old saint. Why such a truly good man should find cause to weep for the sins of others, the second mate could not comprehend. Poor fellow, he had probably not dwelt on the similar scene in Gethsemane.

A touch of transcendent peace and loveliness was impressed upon the fair tropic night. The whole aspect of sea and sky was full of a mysterious beauty, softly attuned to every human heart. The

impression it made was such as often precedes momentous events — the one hallowed hour of peace and holiness ever standing pensive before the swift approaching moments of dissolution; an hour of exalted intuitions, when man catches glimpses of his diviner self, and perceives an urgent necessity for God-wardness he had never known before.

CHAPTER XI.

DEATH OF THE MAD WHALE.

IT was now nearly four o'clock in the morning. Mr. Bailey had become the centre of a little cluster of his men gathered amidships, and was instructing them as to the probabilities of seeing whales during the coming day. He had gone so far as to assert that they would be large ones; at least *a* large one. The tranquil morning was approaching, and the broad moonglade was glittering down the west like a bridge of gold floating on the summer sea. So low had the moon sunk into the western board, that sea and sky were blended into one, and her golden effulgence shone broad and bright into the faces gathered in the lee waist.

At that instant the huge form of a monster whale was seen to shoot out into the yellow moonglade, hold its black outline defined with terrible distinctness for an instant, — poised ninety feet in the glimmering air, — and fall crashing back upon the shining waters it had emerged from. Had a thun-

derbolt fallen among the seamen they could not have been more electrified.

The whale had breached out with his ponderous side fair to the view of the men, so as to present a sharp, clear outline of head and hump and fin, of the most gigantic leviathan of his kind. With bated breath they beheld him for an instant, then with one voice they were heard exclaiming, "A Sperm whale! a Sperm whale!"

"Ay, and as big as a ship!" said one.

"Hang my toplights! that's Mocha Dick, for I saw the crook in his jaw," exclaimed an old sailor, as he hurriedly approached his shipmates amidships.

"Yis, chilun, dat's Mocha, sartin' surè." And the old man's face became radiant with reverence and joy. Baring his white head to the breeze — as if standing in the presence of his Maker — Uncle Joe exclaimed:

"'Tanks, deah Lawd! I kno'd yo' would answer de prayers ob dis po' ole sinner."

Those about him assert that a halo encircled the head of the venerable old man in that moment, while his face was turned to the sky. It came like a flash, and was gone in an instant — a brief shechinah in answer to his invocation, which told to the few that, although he was with them, he was not wholly of them.

A thrill of terror crept over every soul at the sudden announcement that the great whale was Mocha Dick, the "Tiger Whale of the Pacific."

From him the stoutest ship was no protection in his angry moods of depredation, as his destruction of the ships "Essex" and "Ann Alexander" would show. And how many more of the missing vessels might go to his account, none could tell. His vast head was said to be bristling with oaken splinters of the crushed vessels he had sent to the bottom, while the boats and brave men charged to his dire account were numerated by the hundreds.

Again and again the huge monster breached out into the moonlight, and as he came tumbling back into the shining sea, there leaped up into the glimmering air a white fountain of foam, shivered and shattered in the gorgeous light, as if millions of gleaming jewels were showering down upon a river of gold.

After the third breach the whale straightened himself out upon the water, and threw up a large spout, as tall as that of a finback. If his form had not been so distinctly seen, displaying his shape so visibly, none would have believed it could be a sperm whale, his spout was so large and so strong.

Word had been passed to call Captain Lawrence; but hearing the shouts of the seamen at the first breach, he and Mr. Braybrook had got on deck in time to see the last grand leap, as the huge form shot out into the moonbeam and hung suspended an instant, like a black rock from out the shimmering sea. As he now lay quietly spouting upon the surface, within half a mile of the ship, Mr. Bailey

approached the captain, and exclaimed, with much firmness, "Now, Cap'n Lawrence, I mus' hold yer to yer promise."

"Is that Mocha Dick, think you, Uncle Joe?"

"Dar's no doubt 'bout dat, sah," he replied with exultation.

"But we will wait till daylight before we attack him."

"No, Cap'n! no, sah. Dis am de Lawd's 'pinted hour, — de accepted time dis chile's whol' life hab bin y'arnin' fo'. Doan dis'pint dis yer ole niggas!"

"Well, if it's best, Uncle Joe, clear away and tackle him. It will be daylight before he can have more than one deep sound. But if you strike him, best keep clear of the old tiger until daybreak."

"I'll tek car' dat critter dis time, sah. Now gude-by, Cap'n. 'Member Joe Bailey, when we uns am gone ter glory. Fo' dis ole niggas lubs yo' like ar fader. Doan lower, Cap'n, fo' dars trubble ef yer do. Stay 'board an' tek car' de ship; fo' dat ole debble hab got his eye on de Fleetwing." Tears streamed down the old man's cheeks as he wrung the captain's hand, and hobbled toward his boat.

With a choking voice Captain Lawrence bade the dear old man good-by, and then turned to the mate.

"Mr. Braybrook, clear away the three larboard boats. This is Mr. Bailey's old friend. Let him lead the whaling, and strike first boat. Lower away carefully."

These words imparted youth and vigor to Joe Bailey. He sprang like a young boy to unloose the after gripe of the boat, while Jose, who had long since caught the infection from his old officer, with equal celerity cast loose the forward fastenings, and as the boat was hoisted, and the cranes swung in-board, the two brave men leaped into the bow and stern of the boat. She was lowered swiftly away, while the eager crew climbed down the slideboards, and took their places as she reached the water.

The whale lay broadside to the ship, heading along with the vessel. So, remembering they were directly off his eye, Mr. Bailey set his sail and headed out astern of the ship, for the purpose of making a wide circuit, so as to approach the whale from behind. The breeze had freshened a little, and the swift boat soon took them down the wind, until they could gibe, and luff around with a beam wind, and follow in the wake of the unconscious whale.

As they ran down upon the moon-side of the whale his broad back shone and glistened in the night beam, as he surged slowly through the tranquil sea, while his large vapory spout unrolled itself out upon the rising breeze, and blew down the lee like a ribbon of floating gauze, glittering with tinsel and spray. As he rose into better view in spouting, and displayed his massive form above the surface, it seemed more a deed of temerity than bravery to assail a creature of such stupendous power for evil; agile and cunning as an Indian of the forest, and so ferocious in

his fury that never yet had his assailant escaped his flukes or his fangs. Here was a monster who easily crushed a vessel by his breaching, or shattered a boat into splinters by the lightest blow of his tail. Where was the hope of winning when battling with such a fiend of the sea?

As they sailed up into the oily wake of the whale they caught the strong spermaceti smell. It was like a bugle note to the knights of old. The faintest hearts began to arouse for the occasion, and for the moment fear abided not aboard. The men showed their excitement by peeling for the fight. Some stripped to shirt and pants,—hatless and shoeless,—deliberately rolling their sleeves to the armpits, as if they were about to grapple with a human giant.

There were no idle words spoken, no bravado in their acts of preparation, for all knew it was to be a death-grapple with the mightiest monster of his kind. They approached him with the stern courage of those who pray before they fight—the courage of the Puritan, not the cavalier.

The most cheerful soul among them was Uncle Joe, and he was calm as a clock. He gave his few orders in a calm and tender voice, like one who feels he is about to sacrifice himself to his fellows. If Jose, the boat steerer, showed any nervousness, it was only by trying several new positions, as he braced himself in the clumsy-cleat in act to dart his irons. He saw carefully to his box line, and poised his iron in his left hand with more than usual care.

They now began to approach so near that the spouts sounded harshly in their ears. The snappings of the spout-hole were heard with distinctness, as he inhaled after each spout. He lay plainly visible in the moonlight, exposing his broad back from his great hump to his monstrous head.

As the boat now came very near to him he was seen to curl up the thin propelling edges of his flukes above the surface, measuring twenty-five feet across his tail. What a weapon of defence, to snap like a whip-lash about the head of an assailant!

The whale showed a corner of his flukes just in time to prevent the boat from grounding on it. Uncle Joe was steering to pass over the flukes, as usual, but he was now warned to keep clear, and pass around. Another moment, sailing in that direction, and the battle was ended before it had fairly begun. For to have touched his terrible pedal member, was to receive a lift skyward, higher than Haman hung of old.

One strong sweep of the steering oar, and the frail boat swung clear of the threatened destruction before her, and then rounded the dread flukes in act to grapple with her prey. One stands appalled at the hazard they run! It was a moment crowded with feelings so intense, that none but the calmest and bravest know the watchword of the hour, and can stand on the battlement of such peril, and interpret the outlook of the soul; a moment when one seems to be floating upward — out of himself — as

if the disembodied spirit took wings, while awaiting the impending shock to her clay.

But one sentence was spoken, and that by Uncle Joe: "Be sure an' car'ful, Jose, boy!"

Jose's reply was by plunging his two swift irons deep into the body of the monster, till they stood quivering erect, like two tiny masts in a black hull.

An instant's pause, as if he were shocked by the blow, and out flashed his great flukes into the moonlight, striking back upon the water until the night air resounded with the blows. With a few swift, ponderous blows, he battered the glittering sea into a mountain of foam, then pitched, and went down into the boiling deep with a rush.

The whale had lain and watched the ship to windward of him, attributing all noise he might have heard to the proximity of the vessel. He had known nothing of the sharp boat's approaching him under sail until he had felt the keen barbs piercing his wrinkled side.

For once, Mocha Dick was surprised by a night attack. But the end was not yet. He had gone down to collect his startled senses, and plan his first assault upon his assailants. Fierce and terrible must be the encounter between such men and such a beast — fearless both, and long used to battling with the foe.

Mr. Braybrook pulled up, and offered his line to the bow boat. But Mr. Bailey declined it, while he quickly placed his two lances in position, adding,

Fred Webster



“Mocha Dick nebber sounds werry deep, sah. Dat critter’s game am sly an’ cunnin’ down b’low dar; but de ole debble will fought fair up a-top de water.”

“Where is he now, Uncle Joe?” inquired the mate.

“He’s cumin’ up now, sah. Dar! de line slacks. Haul de line, chilun!— Better yo’ keep out starn, Misser Braybruc, till de ole critter show hissef.”

Approaching near to the surface the old whale speeded up, and ran for awhile like a race-horse. These were new tactics for Mocha. Did he instinctively feel he had met his doom at last? Or was he, too, wishing for daylight before he came to the death-grapple? He was never before known to take to the defensive. At length he came to the surface, on a half breach, and headed slowly down towards the ship. The crisis of the combat was approaching.

The captain, fourth mate and John Kanaka rushed to the ship’s side with their lances ready to defend her. But this movement proved only a feint, to learn the whereabouts of the scattered boats. For when within a few hundred yards of the ship, Mocha wheeled suddenly around for the fast boat, and rushed madly towards her, pounding his huge head upon the water as he ran. With murderous, ominous sound, he snapped his terrible jaws together with impatience to seize the boat, until the jar of meeting bone and ivory vibrated

through ship and boats like the undulating shock of an earthquake.

Uncle Joe at once paid out upon his line, and got quick stern-way upon his boat, keeping her fairly head to the cunning whale. The old man encouraged his men to keep cool, and be watchful for his orders. He had previously bent on a drag to the third iron, and he now caught the iron up for defensive use, if needed.

The whale came tearing on through the water toward them, striking the boat fairly upon her stem with his head, and sending her spinning through the water astern, unharmed. He had failed to destroy them by his own impetuosity. As again he started for the boat with increased ferocity, he rolled quickly over upon his back, with his ponderous jaws wide extended to engulf them. His open mouth presented fair to the light of the setting moon, until tongue and mouth — which were of silvery whiteness — shone with a mysterious phosphoric glow in the waning moon-fire of the morning. It is this phosphorescent gleaming which attracts its prey in the deep-sea feeding-grounds. But now this mouth of fire strikes terror to the heart of his assailants.

Onward he came for his second attack. But just before he struck the boat with his head, Mr. Bailey let fly the third iron down his open throat. At that moment the whale's crooked jaw was towering thirty feet in the air above them. But the instant the iron buried itself in his tongue and throat, the massive

jaw came down like a thunderbolt, barely clearing the head of the daring old whaleman. That iron was an unexpected blow for Mocha, and disturbed his equanimity for a moment. He dashed his head high into the air as he ground the oaken pole of the iron between his jaws, and sank away stern foremost under the waters, which he had lashed into foam before retreating.

Thus far the battle was wholly against Mocha. Never had he been so foiled in his attacks before. His sheepish way of backing out of the fight by a stern-board showed he had become disconcerted. He settled away about a hundred fathoms under the surface, and there lay sulking for half an hour, until daylight broke fairly upon the scene.

In the meantime Captain Lawrence had cleared away his boat and come down to join in the fight. He pulled up to the bow boat, and inquired of Mr. Bailey how much line was out, and in what direction it extended.

Mr. Braybrook was on the opposite side of the fast boat from the captain, while Mr. Morey, in the waist boat, lay out astern of them all. Thus situated, the three boats formed a triangle around the fast boat. While all were in this position the line began to vibrate strongly against the water, as if the whale were making some rapid movement towards the surface. At first the fast boat forged quickly ahead, enough to deceive the loose boats, and lead them to suppose the whale was certainly shooting

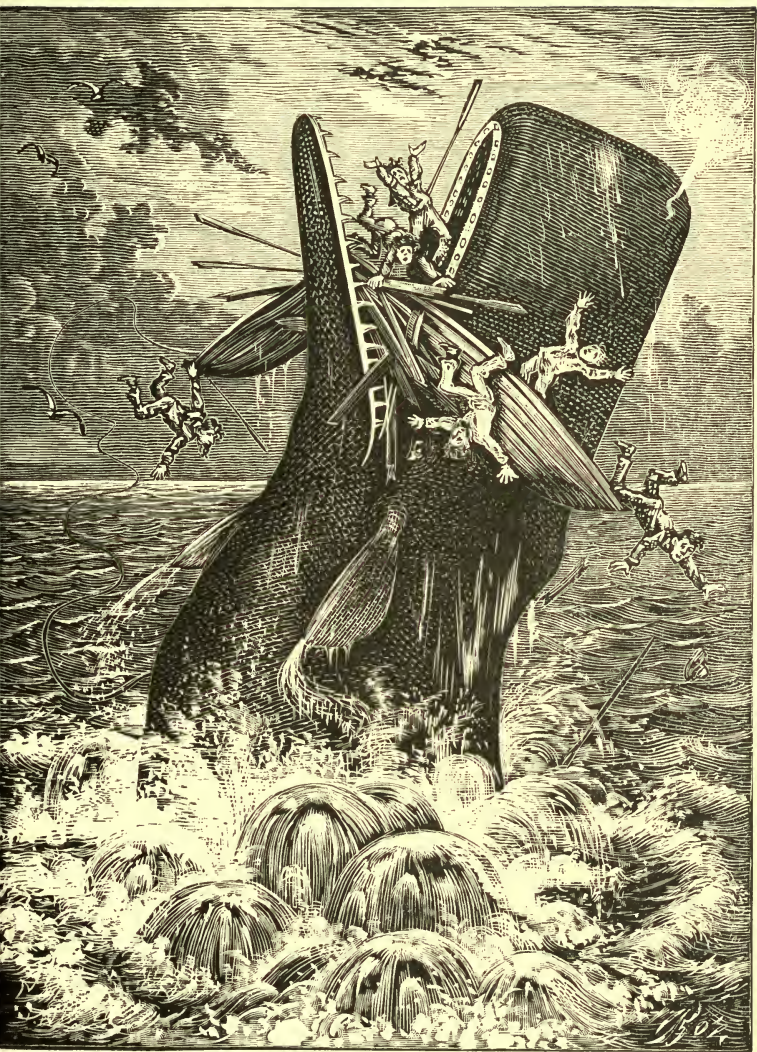
out ahead, while instead, he was actually coming so swiftly towards them as to draw the fast boat forward to meet him, by the resisting water acting as a pulley for the line to draw against.

But old Joe Bailey was not to be deceived by such a trick of the cunning whale; for after intently watching the line for an instant, he ordered Jose to slack out line, and pull quickly ahead on the oars, announcing to the other boats that the whale had milled towards them, and was coming swiftly to the surface.

The captain and mate soon got headway on their boats, and hurriedly left the spot; but Mr. Morey felt secure from being so far astern of them all, and lay quietly looking for the whale to come up somewhere ahead of him.

Without other warning than a sharp thumping vibration against the bottom of their boat, before the whale appeared, they were instantly caught in the open mouth of the whale, as he came leaping up from directly beneath them, furious with rage and eager for combat.

Thrusting his gray and battered head out sixty feet into the morning air, he crushed the frail boat between his jaws, and holding her by the 'midships, shook the two ends asunder, as an agile dog might shake the head from a rabbit. The tub and 'midship oarsmen were ground into pulp in a second, while the four other unbitten ones came tumbling headlong back into the water, as the two ends of the



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boat fell dangling down the sides of the infuriated whale.

Still keeping his hold upon the boat amidships, he thrashed his head down upon the wreck around him, until the several parts of the boat were completely demolished, and the dead bodies of the men had sunk away into the unknown depths of the sea. Satisfied with this assault, he again settled away stern foremost as before, and lay quietly in the deep sea for a half hour's respite.

When Mr. Bailey had defined just where the whale lay, by the line, and become assured he was remaining quiet, the mate pulled ahead and picked up the four surviving swimmers, consisting of Mr. Morey, the boat steerer, and the bow and after oarsmen.

Mr. Braybrook started at once for the ship with the bruised and dripping crew, while Captain Lawrence pulled up and secured the snarl of line to some of the larger pieces of the wreck.

At this moment the fast line suddenly slackened by some quick movement of the whale. Uncle Joe shouted loudly to the captain, as he took his own oars, "Look out fur him, Cap'n Lawrence, he's arter yo'!"

The starboard crew sprung ahead upon their oars, just in time to escape the fate of the waist boat. The mad whale came breaching out at the very spot they had vacated, with jaws wide extended, seeking a mouthful of man-meat and cedar.

Finding himself eluded by the wary crew, he caught up a mouthful of floating wreck and line, and plunged on after the retreating boat, his rage intensified by the foil. Overtaking them in a moment he endeavored to crush the boat with his massive head, striking it down upon their stern, as they sped away through the water, impelled by frantic oars. His first blow broke the long steering oar into fragments. This encouraged him to keep up the chase, but enraged him until he snorted out his angry spout with the noise of a roaring bull.

Now was Mr. Bailey's chance to steal upon him with a lance, and he availed himself of it in a moment. Every man in the bow boat was seen hauling line with the strength of a giant.

As they approached the flukes of the whale, Uncle Joe caught up his lance, and prepared for the deadly encounter. The voice of the old hero was quiet and soothing, as if hushing a babe to repose, as the boat stole swiftly upon the whale. It was the happiest hour of his long life of battle and toil.

Time was too brief to stop for oars, so the avenging boat was hauled with frantic hands, impelling her directly alongside the plunging monster. With their keen prow cleaving the water like an arrow, they skimmed over the ponderous flukes, and drew forward of the hump, still unseen. But just as Joe Bailey was drawing upon him the deadliest lance of the Pacific — aye, of all the world — and burying it deep into his vitals, this “Satan of the Sea,” with

one more desperate effort to reach the flying boat before him, breached out upon her stern, with the death-lance hanging in his side, and shattered the boat into splintered fragments. The two after oarsmen were killed in an instant, and brave John Kanaka, the boat steerer, was lying crushed in the wreck of the stern.

Mocha now turned his whole attention to Uncle Joe, who, fearless as his mammoth foe, was again plying his lance, after the whale had come down from his death-leap in the air. Although Mocha Dick had received his death-wound, deep and sure, true to his old tigerish instinct to the last, with jaw wide extended at a right angle, rolling he swept from side to side, with dire intent to crush the boat that had wounded him.

But no one knew better than Joe Bailey what next to expect. And while he now kept his bow line hauled taut up to the very iron in the side of the whale, he had also doubly provided against the tricks to come by fastening with his second line into the after part of the whale, thus giving him a line at both ends of the boat by which to avoid either jaw or tail, as the case might be.

Again and again the keen lance was plunged into the rolling whale. Failing with his harrowing jaws to crush the cunning boat, Mocha Dick thrust his gray old head under the surface, and began battling the crimson sea with the most gigantic flukes the eye of man ever saw. But thanks to the good judgment

of Jose, the boat steerer, the first irons had been planted well forward on the whale. So, while the line was kept taut at the bow, the stern of the boat could not be reached by the lightning blows of the tail, as it flashed through the sea and air.

But another danger now awaited them. By such stupendous blows upon the water, the whale was casting up a column of foam sixty feet into the air, until, like a fountain colored from his own bleeding wounds, it came pouring down upon them like a cataract of blood. The small boat was soon filled to the brim, until her gun'ales were level with the swash of the sea, and the boat and crew were lost to view beneath the descending avalanche of blood and foam.

By their friends on shipboard they were thought to be lost forever. In such a plight none but cool, brave men could save their boat an instant from overturning; but by lashing their sealskin buoy to the one side, and their lantern-keg to the other, the boat was kept upright, awaiting a change of scene.

Tired at length of this battling with the air, Mocha Dick quieted down, and lay sulking upon the water. Then every man set to bailing for dear life, with hats, caps and boat buckets. Uncle Joe dare not slack away from the side of the whale, for once where he could turn upon them they were doomed in an instant. This they well knew, for this very position and scene had been closely thought out and prepared for, for years.

Mocha did not roll with his breast to the boat, so

as to enable Uncle Joe to reach his heart with the lance. And as only the lungs had been pierced, the tough old sinner still kept up his strength for battle, though barrels and barrels of blood came from his spout and wounds.

Driven to the wildest fury by the bow boat's eluding both his jaws and his flukes, Mocha now dashed ahead at his fleetest, maddest speed. Round and round in a circle crimsoned with his own blood he ran, till the sharp boat clove the water like an arrow in the sky. Tearing and surging onward, she cut through the seething, foaming sea, till there rolled, a fathom above her bows, a thin sheet of curling, hissing foam, tinted and stained with the life-current of the foe.

Plunging and breaching, rushed the maddened whale; fiendish though dying; fierce as a tiger, and furious as a storm; now bearing the "death flag" in his spout, which had flaunted with defiance along every shore and throughout every sea. But like the brave hound hanging to the haunch of the fleeing deer hung the daring boatmen to his battered and barnacled side. Faster and faster onward he dashed, bleeding and dying, and maddening as he ran; until the snowy foam of the sea and the turbid gore of the whale mingled their discordant emblems. But escape he could not, for, like the ghosts of his hundred victims, followed the avenging boat. Wheel and plunge as he would, ever were they there.

Still failing to encounter the cunning boat, Mocha

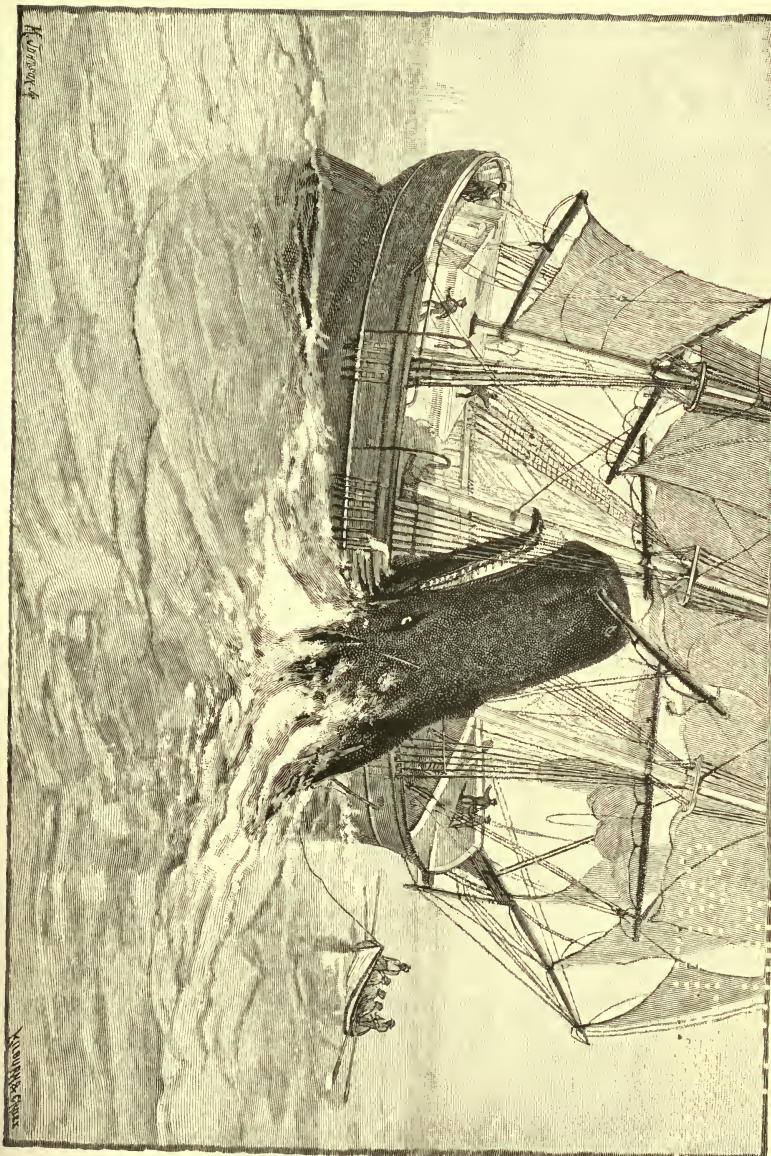
wheeled about to grapple with the ship, but so weakened and disheartened had he become that he lowered his "red flag" as he ran. He soon approached the vessel, which lay near by to windward, taking on board the captain and the survivors of his crew. Captain Lawrence at once took the conn of the ship, all dripping and wounded as he was. Brailing the spanker, and shivering the cross-jack, the ship was headed off directly for Mocha Dick, to sustain the coming shock upon her bow. For all knew it was by his broad side blows they would be endangered, as had been the case with all vessels previously sunken.

Onward came the dying whale to meet the ship, superhuman in his courage to the last. Ship and whale met head on, in full career, with a shock as if they had each encountered a rock; and, as the ship presented the greater momentum of the two, the dying whale got the worst of the blow. Doubly enraged at his rough reception, Mocha receded but to come again and again, with open jaws, trying along half the length of the Fleetwing to bite into her oaken side. In running this gauntlet several more lances were darted at him as he passed.

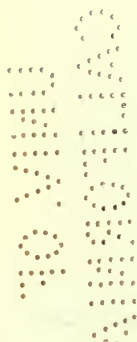
Foiled in his attempt to bite or stave the ship with his head, the stubborn old whale settled away stern foremost under water, as if to complete some new mischief. By this new move the fast boat was compelled to pay out her line, and take her chances of being again attacked by the whale.

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But his attention was still fixed upon the ship, and he had settled away under water to obtain headway for a breach upon her deck. If he had succeeded fairly in this attempt, he would certainly have cut her asunder, as he had previously crushed many a one before her. But he was becoming too weak to succeed fully in this intent. Yet this was his design; and he was soon seen coming up on a weak half-breach, thrusting his gray, corrugated head out fifty feet over the deck of the vessel.

As he breached languidly out upon the noble Fleetwing she careened over towards him until her yard-arms dipped in the gory sea, as if she would be crushed to the water's edge by the stupendous mass. And as the dying monster crashed down through main-rail and bulwarks, planksheer and timbers, until her side gave way down to the waterways of her between-decks, it seemed to all as if she must be cut through to the keel, and sink on the instant.

But the integrity of her builder had saved her from utter destruction this time. Exhausted by this last act of desperation, Mocha Dick was dead, and sank slowly back into the sea, carmine with his own life-blood.

A little higher breach, giving a trifle more momentum to the blow, and even the stanch and beautiful Fleetwing would now be numbered with those wrecks of Mocha's which have gone to people the blue depths of the sea.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ISLE OF PALMS.

AS the Fleetwing righted to her bearings, it was discovered that she was stoven within six inches of her water line, as she now lay careened a little by the breeze. Before the ship had ceased rolling from the shock, Captain Lawrence had ordered the foresail cut away from the yard, and got over the bows, to be drifted along aft under her bottom and over the stoven side. Another gang of men were getting up tackles on the swifsters and backstays, by which to bowse taut when all was ready. The pumps were manned at once, and kept vigorously plying.

It was not long before the sail was fairly in position over the hole, and bowsed to closely fit the shape of the vessel. It was a heavy cotton-canvas cruising-sail, and once hauled taut in place the pumps were soon sucked, making all hearts glad. The stoven place was on the starboard side, reaching from the fore-chains to the main swifter, and extending across the deck to the combings of the hatchway

—such a rent as a thousand thunderbolts could not have accomplished. Fearful indeed is the mass and might of the leviathan of the sea.

But there lay, to leeward, a greater instance of his prowess than this. A hickory iron-pole, six feet in length—thick as an arm—was struck while floating lightly upon the water, and broken and splintered by a blow from his tail.

“Mocha Dick is dead!” said an exultant soul, drawing a long breath.

“He’s dead, and I’m glad,” exclaimed another.

“Yes, he’s dead; and thank the Lord for our delivery,” were the exclamations that bubbled out from many a half-choked soul,—words that came borne upon an undulation of suppressed sobs, dewy with the tear-drops which ooze prayerfully, not alone from the eyes, but from the hearts of strong, brave men.

But of all the happy souls, none had such cause for tearful, prayerful joy as good Uncle Joe. His eye was glistening with aqueous jewels for many a day thereafter. The great mission of his maimed and crippled life was consummated. He had now rid the Pacific of the most dangerous cachalot the world has known,—a spermaceti which had committed more devastation among ships, boats and seamen than all other cetacea of his kind.

The old whaler had gone into the combat without a thought of coming out alive. He had not even asked for his life to be spared, in all his prayers, and he had not dreamed it would be vouchsafed to him

unmasked for. His mind had been left in no doubt as to the result of the coming encounter with Mocha Dick ; but his prophetic vision had portrayed to him death, and wreck, as the sacrificial offering ; and he had not doubted but his decrepit old days were numbered among the rest, who had been cut off in their strength and beauty.

As soon as Mr. Bailey saw the dear old ship was saved, he drew in his line, and secured a fluke rope to the whale, which he took to the ship as she lay drifting towards him. Her yards were lying square, and her sails aback, just as she had luffed to the wind after her encounter with Mocha.

The whale once secured to the stern, the fourth mate was sent off to pick up what could be found of the stoven boats, and bring their lines on board. The dead bodies that were saved were laid out under an awning on the top of the cabin. The three wounded men were grouped together on their mattresses upon the after quarter-deck, and their wounds dressed by Dr. Greville, with what alleviates the ship afforded.

The carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, and a gang of the most mechanical of the seamen, all under the direction of the mate, were set to work upon the stoven side. The heavy cotton foresail was sufficient protection for moderate weather, but would not be security enough to encounter a gale, until the hole was planked up and timbered. At first, all were intensely anxious, in fear the ship's bottom

had sustained irreparable injury; but when the pumps were sucked dry, and the full extent of their danger was known, all felt new hope, and the whole force was set to work to repair the stoven side.

The sail was guyed broadly out from the side, a staging got over, and the carpenters went vigorously to work clearing away the oaken splinters of planks, timbers and water-ways. After many hours the wreck was cleared away enough so that patterns of the lower planks could be fitted to the hole. By adjusting thin cedar boards where a plank was wanted, a pattern was formed, by which the oaken planks could be fitted to the exact requirements of the hole. While this was going on upon the outside, another gang between-decks were fitting in timbers hewn from some of the old spare topmasts.

The ship was kept drifting with her head-yards to the mast. As it was the season of typhoons in this far western sea there had been much uneasiness manifested to get the ship secure enough to encounter a gale, which is always threatened by such conjunction of moon phases as now prevailed. Were it a new moon instead of an old one, with the same baleful phases conjoined, neither latitude nor location could prevent an elementary war of wind or rain.

It had got to be toward night, and the western sky had become dappled with crimson and gold. This was hailed as a good omen by all, and it gladdened the tired heart of every beholder.

It was in that same western direction they had first seen Mocha leaping out from the yellow moon-glade. And now in that direction they discovered a small, green palm isle, just emerging to view. Its foliage seemed to be growing out of the water, for nothing but tree-tops could be seen. A golden halo crowned the waving tree-tops, as the torrid sun dropped like a ball of fire toward the gorgeous sea beyond.

Captain Lawrence took his glass and went aloft to see how best to avoid the island. He soon made out that it was in the form of a hollow circle, one of the curious atoll islands of the tropics, with a narrow opening showing between the trees on the south side, seeming to form it into a little land-locked harbor. There was also an emerging coral reef on the southwest side, half encircling the little isle around to the westward.

The captain at once determined to send in Mr. Braybrook to survey the entrance and ascertain if there was secure anchorage in the haven, in which case the discovery would seem to be providential, as the ship could then be repaired at their leisure. The mate was soon on his way under sail and oars, while the captain watched closely with his glass to observe if there were any intruding reefs off the entrance to prevent the ingress of the ship.

Mr. Braybrook soon reached the island and ran down its coral shore in the cool shade of the tropic foliage, whose wild, untutored trees were bending

with abundant fruit ; some in its bud and springtime, other in the rich maturity of autumnal ripening, — such a wilderness of fruit and flower and foliage as always gladdens the eye of man. To these tired and war-worn mariners this haven of safety was much to be thankful for ; but when safety was found encompassed with such a garniture of thrift and beauty, gratitude betrayed itself by the tear-drops in every eye.

The entrance was found narrow, but bold and deep. The boat's crew pulled swiftly through the half-embowered channel, into the very heart of this little Isle of Palms, as they named it, and found everything much to their liking. Though the entrance was narrow, it was more than wide enough for the Fleetwing, and as clean cut as the sides of a pier. True, the upper yards and sails would tumble and toss the foliage, and tear its fringe of vine ; but here was no human Argus to cry out at the trespass, or throttle the transgressor who would eat to his full of the primeval fruit, fresh from the hand of his Maker.

After ascertaining there was a good bottom of coral sand to anchor in, on either side of the entrance, the mate pulled out at once to the mouth of the channel, and made signal for the ship to come on and anchor. This news imparted gladness to those on board, for over the bland, cerulean sea there fluttered down on the wings of the wind indistinct and broken words — like the flying of half-fledged

birds, but birds which had found a sheltering nest to protect them at last from the storm.

Captain Lawrence at once ordered a six-inch hawser secured to the whale, for towing purposes. The chains were roused up and soon shackled to the anchors, which were got off of the bow, ready for dropping. Then the ship was kept away before the wind, with the whale in tow. While the Fleetwing was preparing, and when running down to the island, Braybrook kept busily pulling in and out of the channel, and around the harbor, to make sure there were no hidden dangers. There was no need of sounding, for the water was clear as crystal, and the whole bottom could be plainly seen, even in the gathering shadows that crept over this enchanting isle.

As the ship approached the entrance, the mate, having assured himself of a clear coast and bottom, pulled swiftly to the ship, and so reported. Sail was now shortened at once, down to topsails and jib. The ship kept on along the shore until the channel opened fairly to the view, then she luffed, and headed for the entrance, carrying a gentle beam wind, and running in with flowing sheets.

As the vessel entered fairly into this half-embowered passage the fluke rope was slacked away, dropping Mocha astern, thus leaving the ship unimpeded, that she might pass more quickly through the channel. The yards brushed away the green boughs gracefully as they passed, until fruit and

leaves were showered down upon their deck, amid joyous ripples of laughter from the sailors at the novelty of the scene.

After a few moments' passage the Fleetwing shot through into the windless bay, forging on by her own momentum, until she dropped her noisy anchor in the very heart of this little hollow isle.

The hoarse rattle of the rumbling cable echoed strangely through the forest glades and dim cathedral aisles of this bewitching sylvan temple. In an hour the bustle of anchoring and furling sails was over, when they found themselves in a breezeless sheet of glassy water, mysterious with deepening shadows, where silence reigned profound; near around them the varied foliage of a tropical forest, fragrant with fruit and flowers. Above them a clear canopy of blue—spangled with a thousand star-beams—hung like a fitting dome over this enchanting shrine of the sea.

What a contrast was this stillness and calm to the tragic events of the day! Hushed was the wild turmoil of human outcry and anger, in deadly combat with a frenzied foe; hushed the dread shock of crashing timbers, and the anguished cry of dying braves, when the pulseless heart stops—listening with bated breath for its own doom. They could not realize the terror and toil which they had passed through as they now reposed in safety in this haven of rest, and were made to feel that the hand of God had interposed in their behalf.

But a look at Mocha as he lay chained by their side — terrible even in death — and at the havoc he had made with ship and boats, their mangled dead and their wounded shipmates, brought the reality into presence again.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE ROMANTIC BURIAL.

THOUGH the anchor-watch had been set early in the evening, the tropic night was so beautiful, and the events of the day had been so unusual, that all thoughts of sleep were abandoned, and not a soul left the deck till past midnight. Both officers and seamen were eager to exchange personal experiences about the dreadful whale fight, and, as might be expected, an unusual number of unredeemed men were ready to openly confess their belief that God's providential care had been visibly exercised in their behalf.

The two dead bodies that had been recovered were laid out on the tryworks, ready for the morrow's burial. The other two that were killed had been so mangled that they sank at once. The four wounded men had been placed on mattresses upon the cabin deck, — an airy "sick-bay," — over which an awning was stretched to shield them from the moonbeams, and the night dews, if such there were.

Dr. Greville was in frequent attendance upon the half-crushed men, while Mr. Bailey never left their side throughout the night. Though every one commiserated the distressing condition of the men, Uncle Joe claimed the exclusive privilege of alleviating their pain, on the plea that he had been the indirect cause of their disaster.

John Kanaka, the captain's boat steerer, was too severely hurt to have much hope of his recovery, but 'Tucket, Pico and two other Portuguese bade fair to be up and about in a week or two. The captain's bruises were not sufficient to lay him up; he probably owed his life to going forward into the bow of the boat just before the whale attacked him.

Mr. Morey's escape was deemed the most miraculous of all. When the brave officer found himself lifted skyward, and tumbling headlong into the whale's mouth, he seized upon the pole of the iron which Bailey had flung down the whale's throat; thrusting himself away from impending death, and falling backward into the water, he saved himself by swimming quickly from beneath the falling boat.

As not a person in Mr. Bailey's boat was injured it became a grievous reflection to the good old soul, lest some evil-minded person should deem that he had not encountered his full share of danger. The old whaler had not harbored a doubt but he should be killed in the fight. The brave man had accepted such a result as a most glorious ending. Thus, to be saved by what seemed divine interposition, filled

the saintly old man with new reverence and love for the Heavenly Father.

As the evening shut down over the windless bay the officers gathered aft about the taffrail, conversing in subdued voices, and occasionally listening to Dr. Greville's report about the wounded men.

The steerage people had clustered about the wreck amidships, sitting with their legs dangling down the great hole made by the breaching whale. The broken main-yard and the stranded main-stay hung down in their midst, indisputable evidence of the high upward reach of the whale's head.

The reflections of the fore-castle men were solemn and sad. They were so awed by the veritable presence of Death that neither song nor joke passed the lips of any. The proximity of the mad whale was sufficient to keep awake their apprehensions, as there were none but believed Mocha to be the head devil of all whale-kind.

Even growling old Bill became almost amiable. He had not been heard to utter a word of dissent against Uncle Joe for leading the crew into such uncalled-for peril. But Brown's new-found contrition mostly arose from terror, as he expressed belief that Satan was abroad upon the waters; and he further confessed that he was more fit for tophet than any of the four who were killed. He was, in fact, greatly surprised at his own preservation from the very jaws of the whale, as he was the bow oarsman in the waist boat. Brown honestly believed it to

have been a trial of strength between Satan and the Lord, — an act of divine power worth remembering, and which might amend his ways.

Crawford and Buntline were in the mate's boat, which had escaped all harm. Frequently tears were discovered in the eyes of these veterans when they recounted the terrible scenes they had witnessed. The horror depicted on the faces of their crushed shipmates, when the whale closed his jaws upon them, could never be effaced from their minds. The shrieks of the maimed victims still rung in their ears, till they cowered and cringed at the recollection; and it served to resurrect every baleful superstition of their lives.

As eight bells announced the hour of midnight a huge fish leaped from the water as if about to take wing for the moon. Tumbling back into the bay with a resounding splash, he aroused everybody from their morbid condition. It had the effect to break up the condoling groups about the deck. The mate called out forward, to say that the bow boat's crew had the watch; and ordered all others below, as a busy day was coming.

The moon had climbed high above the little Isle of Palms, flooding all with her brightest beams, and casting her minutest shadows. Her strong light pencilled the wooded shores in the glassy bay till the reflected trees and vines vied with the parent foliage along the shore.

The half-wrecked Fleetwing lay snugly moored in

the little land-locked harbor, forgetful of the battle and the breeze, slumbering among the mysterious shadows of the half-embowered bay. The shining beach of coral sand, now lit up by the moon, girdled the ship about with a riband of gleaming silver.

The submerged branches of coral shrubs along the shore were made whiter by the silvery light, until they appeared like the skeletons of some former foliage from the trees, long since inhumed beneath the blue water.

Here and there some of the thrifty coral growths protruded their ghostly tops above the surface, appealing — like the arms of sun-worshippers — to the queen of Night. Upon some of these emerging coral-tops dead leaves and rich soil had accumulated, offering tempting foothold to little tufts of rare shrubbery and starlike flowers, till at length they became thrifty isles, perched in mid-air. From out these fairy islets clambered trailing vines, whose green tendrils reached high above shrub and flower, until some passing wind-gust tossed them among the tree-tops ashore, and they formed bewitching archways over the intervening water.

These tropic growths, found perched upon the little *motus*, — the Polynesian for such small coral isles, — form rare pictures never to be forgotten. Some of them took on the semblance of quaint oriental vases, of sheeny white, mauve-colored, or crimson, the rose-hues abounding everywhere. In all the mimicry of art there is nothing conceived

so beautiful as in Nature, when thus found in untutored seclusion in a thrifty clime.

At the earliest dawn all hands were roused out and set to work. The carpenters, and a dozen helpers, were kept busy on the stoven side, which was to be built up from the water's edge to the main rail. Others of the crew were making preparations for burying the dead.

The broad ensign, with its stars and stripes, was set half-mast at the peak. The long pendant trailed from the skysail pole, while the two ship's colors fluttered from the fore and mizzen royal masts. The Union Jack, its blue ground decked with white stars, was reserved to shroud the two coffins, which were laid on the main hatch, waiting the service before burial.

Mr. Braybrook went out in the early morning to select a fitting burial-place. He chose a little *motu* in the northern crescent of the bay, which the ingenious sailors named Bird's Nest, from the countless red lories found nesting upon it. When the birds were driven away for the time, they filled the air with clatter at the unseemly intrusion of man.

The Bird's Nest was a little gem, only twenty feet in diameter; a complete tangle of wildering shrubs, blossoming vines, and other flowers. The tiny isle was founded upon an immense mauve-colored fan-coral, which had incautiously emerged from the water, to be grappled by the hungry elements of earth and air. The dead leaves and wind-blown soil

followed, forming a dainty receptacle for prolific seeds brought by the birds and breeze, together building up a floral temple enchanting as a dream, and a most fitting mausoleum for the heroic dead.

Near the Bird's Nest was another, more quaint and novel than that. This was planted upon a fallen tree-top, which was anchored to the shore by its long slim trunk, the roots still nourished by the soil, — thus forming a tiny floating isle, gemmed with rare plants and drooping foliage.

Some of the sailors when entering the harbor, with their usual aptitude for christening sea-names, called this little novelty Lullaby Isle, because of the wave-motion imparted to it by the ship when she ran into the bay. The rocking of the float-island created amazement among the superstitious men, who then had no knowledge of its formation.

This fallen cocoa-nut palm had once been the lordliest tree of the forest, but having raised its umbrageous top in regal pomp and pride too high above its fellows, a fierce cyclone had grappled it, and hurled it into the blue waters of the bay.

After breakfast the officers and crew gathered sorrowfully about their dead shipmates at the call of Captain Lawrence, and with bared heads reverently listened to the service he read to them. When the ship-service was ended, the dead seamen were tenderly placed in the bow boat by some of their own boat's crew, who sprinkled the coffins with tears. The boat was then lowered to await the burial.

Braybrook's boat and Mr. Morey's new waist boat were then lowered away, into which gathered all the men able to attend the funeral. When all were ready to proceed, the two boats towed the hearse-boat away to the Bird's Nest, where a few men stepped ashore and quickly cleared away the vines ready for sepulture. Side by side the two unpainted coffins were laid, and covered thickly over with green palm leaves. Then, one by one, every mourner stepped ashore and strewed the graves with flowers, gathered from the abundance near at hand, and passed over into the boats which had been drawn around the island.

After this had been accomplished, then good old Uncle Joe was permitted to complete the service as he wished. After making some remarks in extenuation of the part he had taken in bringing about the tragic event, the pious old soul wailed aloud his last orison in prayer, — supplicating the Almighty to forgive the part he had taken in the death of the men. Then the displaced vines were replaced again, and the little burial isle scarcely showed a trace of having been disturbed by the hand of man.

At the head of the graves there grew a curious "Clock Plant," — the *Hedysarum gyraus*, of Bengal. It is the most accurate vegetable timekeeper in the world. This shrub was about ten feet high, though it sometimes grows twenty feet or more, in other lands. The leaves of this shrub grow in clusters of three. There is a large central, ovate, terminal leaf,

four inches long, having a small leaflet on each side of it. The central leaf is the hour hand. The two leaflets are the second hands of the clock. The leaf performs a daily gyration, closely following the hourly course of the sun. The leaflets keep up a constant alternate motion. When one beats up, the other beats down, making a jerking movement not unlike that of a second hand.

In the strong heat of mid-day the leaflets make nearly sixty beats to the minutes. Adjust a dial to a cluster of these leaves, and, when the weather is constant, the *Hedysarum* will out-clock many a time-piece constructed by man. So the question arises: Did not prehistoric man acquire his primitive clock-movement from this shrub?

Most plants are supposed to sleep by night, arousing to fullest activity by day. At least, most plants simulate something akin to sleep; while the Floral Clock is ever awake, watching through its whole existence for the coming of its beloved Horus — the sun. Thus we cannot dispute there being an exquisite vegetable psychology in some of the more sensitive plants — something nearly akin to intelligence.

To return to the sepulture: the Clock Plant remained the only headmark of the dead, its green leaves ticking the evolutions of time, onward to eternity. At the foot of the grave grew a cluster of pineapple, but so rooted down through the foundation soil of the *motu*, that the fruit was too salt to be palatable.

When the three boats were ready manned for returning, they pulled twice around the burial isle; and while the men were peering down into the coral grotto beneath, Uncle Joe struck up one of his simple negro melodies, familiar to them all. It was a sweet chant, often sung by one of their dead shipmates, which now served as a farewell dirge while pulling tearfully away.

There were rude men among this sorrowing group of mourners, yet warm, brave hearts were citadelled beneath their bare and brawny chests, and not a dry eye was seen among them all.

With the exception of Mr. Bailey no one returned to the Bird's Nest again, for sailors have unconquerable superstitions about burial-places. But nightly, during the still watches, the saintly old whalerman would alone scull his boat out to the little sepulchre, roll away the stone in prayer, and bow in the presence of his Heavenly Father in profound contrition for the untimely death of his shipmates.

It was many days before the funeral gloom wholly passed from the Fleetwing's crew. Seamen that have long sailed together frequently become greatly attached to each other, especially when they have imperiled their lives in the same boat together. To these, it was a sad service to sepulchre their shipmates in this remote solitude, though more fitting resting place the world does not hold.

Many a grief-stricken soul, in the untemperate zones of other lands, cry out for such an Elysium.

The careworn man yearns for the sweet seclusion of these green isles, where earth and air harmonize, and the fretted ear listens joyfully to the ever-grateful symphonies of ocean.

In our morbid moods, who does not long for the joyous warbling of birds in some sunny land, where their tiny bills ring a-drip with music through the livelong day? Who of us does not love to indulge in the pleasant thought of reposing after death beneath the ever-green, ever-growing foliage of the tropics, far from the inclement elements and the cankering petulance of man; where our requiem may be the gentle surges of the sea, and our lullaby the sad monotone of tropic breezes, wailing their gentle dirge-notes above our graves — forever and forever?

CHAPTER XIV.

TOM DISCOVERS A MERMAID.

THE day had been a toilsome one for the crew of the Fleetwing. While the carpenters had been employed early and late working upon the stoven side, the crew had cut-in the blubber of the mammoth whale, — leaving the junk and case for another day, — and had towed the vast carcass out of the bay, that it should not putrefy in their midst.

Most of the tired toilers were long since lapped in slumber. The more orderly seamen had gone down to their berths in the forecastle. Others, too indolent or exhausted for further effort, had stretched out on the forward deck wherever the drowsy god overtook them.

The larboard boat's crew had the second night-watch. John Hoogley, the boat steerer, had seated himself at the taffrail for a smoke, when he came up, and was soon lost in slumber; for it had been his overboard on the whale, while cutting, and he was greatly overworked.

Beautiful as the night was, Crawford and Buntline were the only ones awake. Nothing seemed to exhaust these hoary-headed Nantucketers, for they were never caught napping during their watch. Ben was sprawled out on the fore hatch, like a swimming frog. He was singing a low, droning whaling song, as the only method of escaping the "land o' nod."

Huge old Tom, the master spirit of the crew, and Demosthenes of the forecastle, had climbed up into the bow boat to contemplate the beauties of the night. For once the garrulous old sailor had become reverent and silent, while reflecting earnestly upon the recent tragic events.

Coming to the end of his cogitation, Tom lay reclining over the gunwale, peering down into the moonlit water, and watching with wonder and awe to see the dusky figures moving about on the coral bottom. More than once this brawny-chested man was startled at the strange creatures clearly visible, gliding in and out of the dark nooks, and swimming about the well-lit sandy lanes, while casting many a furtive glance up at the coppered bottom of the ship.

Suddenly a slight ripple out on the still water caught the alert ear of the old seaman. It was out abeam, in the full glare of the moonglade, which so dazzled Tom's eyes that he would have given up the search but for the gentle breathing that met his ear, and continued distinct and regular as human respiration. Searching intently, and extending his gaze

two ship's lengths away, he saw the head and arms of a sweet-faced girl, looking timidly up into his face.

The morbid state of mind Crawford was in half induced him to believe that he was looking upon some supernatural being, such as he had just been contemplating in his pious reflections. Having seen mermaids on some of his previous voyages, he at length concluded that what he saw was a veritable water-girl, enshrined in the moonbeam.

As the mermaid approached a little nearer, her large dark eyes shone bright with intelligence, and her long black hair trailed a yard behind her. Recovering from his amazement, Crawford sought to stop Buntline's singing, lest he should frighten away the strange apparition.

"Avast ther, Ben! Brail up yer song-lingo, an' drift 'longside 'ere," he whispered in a tremulous, sepulchral voice, showing the extreme trepidation he was in.

"What's up, matey?" bellowed his drowsy shipmate.

"Hush! yer lubber. Here's ar Marmaid, or suthin', hov'rin' 'twixt wind an' water. Don't make ar rumpus, tackin' an' wearin', an' skeer ther critter."

"What *am* yer blowin' 'bout, Tom? Has yer seen yer Uncle Belzebug? thet yer puff like ar porpus?" queried the obdurate fellow.

"Belzy, be durned! H'ist yer anchor, an' warp up inter berth, 'ere." And Crawford reached down

to help his sleepy messmate up into the boat, greatly agitated.

“Wher’s ther critter what’s skeered yer so, Tom?” he resolutely asked, while climbing over the gunwale and seating himself by Crawford.

“Out on ther beam, in ther thickest o’ ther moonshine.”

“Bless me ! I duz seen suthin’. Am it ar spook, or ar angil, think yer, Tom?” And Buntline became even more dismayed than his friend.

“Spook be durned ! Shine up yer ole blinkers, an’ teld us what she am.” And Crawford clutched the arm of his companion with a painful grip, to compel him to disgorge something definite, as Buntline’s eyes were much the better of the two.

“Blazes ! It *am* ar ghost, sure pop. An’ ole ‘Bunt’ am kind o’ struck aback in ther head yards.” And the deluded fellow shook, as with a fit of ague.

“Don’t go ter sho’in’ ther ‘white feather,’ yer goney. Let out on yer jaw-tack, an’ teld us yer ‘pinion ’bout She.”

“Mebby She am ar angil. ’Tis ar purtier face nor my ole binnacle lites hev looked on since I moored ’longside o’ Nanc Folger, at Ole Town.”

“Tote away with yer lingo, an’ teld ar feller all yer seen o’ ther lissome critter. For I’m gettin’ weak in ther glim, an’ can’t see She clearly.”

“Ah, Tom ! She be ar jaunty craft. Suthin’ ar bit un’arthly, like ; sum sperrit frum t’other world.”

“Don’t gin out yit, Ben. Lengthen yer telescope, ole boy, an’ teld us sum more.”

“Oh, matey! ole Bunt am gittin’ onsteady in ther lifts an’ braces. Now spoke ther truth, fur onct, Tom, an’ teld me, am She cum fur us uns, think yer?” And the foolish old shellback shook till the boat rattled on the cranes.

“Avast ther! don’t git spoony, ’gin. We am too big sinners ter be tuck by sich ar She.” And Crawford made another desperate effort to be courageous.

“O Moses in ther bulrushes! I wish we uns had never’d cum in ’ere. We’s both wicked ’nough ter be tried by ar jury o’ spooks. But whedder they’ll cum frum ’bove or b’low, ole Bunt can’t teld.”

“Cheer up, ole shipmate! Ye’s too tough in yer garboard strake fur brimstone burnin’ yit awhile. So dry up yer skeery logic, an’ teld sum more ’bout ther Marmaid.” Tom slapped his companion on the back so hard that it frightened the sea-girl.

“Ther, she’s gone!” exclaimed Buntline, with a touch of relief. “She’s let go, an’ gone down ter tophet. Spose ther’s ar lubber hole in ther bottom o’ this ’ere anchorage?”

“Like ’nough ther am,” Tom answered, in a tone of regret.

“Hokey! Tom, don’t I wish we uns wuz out o’ this ere pesky flower gardin? Thet Spook means us, sure pop. What’s yer idee ’bout it, Tom? Yer sorter wise in these ’ere gawspel matters.”

“Think? Why, Ben, ther’ll be no sich critter ez thet ar sent fur us uns. It’ll be ar messenger what can’t take his water-tacks aboard; a chap suited fur land travel, with ar long tiller swung over his taffr’il. An’ ’twon’t take but one pitch o’ ther toastin’ fork ter do ther bis’ness fur us, ole ’Tucket.”

“O Tom, shut up! Don’t git profane like thet. Danger ’nough widout goying ther bull. Ole Nick am ar sensitive gen’lemens, an’ won’t stand sich nonsense.” Ben clambered down out of the boat with unusual alacrity, closely followed by his companion, who was equally apprehensive, but with better faculty to disguise his fears.

“Call out t’other watch, Ben, an’ let’s git b’low, quick time. Mind, ole chum, an’ keep shady ’bout this She un.”

“Right ther, yer am. Gin us yer smoker, matey, ter take ther shake outer me leaches. Ther pesky sins am r’iled up so, ther’s no sleep fur ole Bunt, if thet am ar specter.” With a trembling hand the old croaker hurriedly filled his pipe.

“Prime ’er full, fur two smokes, ole croney. Ben, if She am ar specter ’twon’t do ter show ther ‘white feather.’ ’Taint ’spectable fur ole water-dogs like we is. So, Buntline, mum is ther word.”

“Mum ’tis, Tom,” he replied, between the prolonged puffs at the black, stubby pipe; and the two superstitious old Tars stole hurriedly below, after calling the watch, and indulged in a night lunch of “salt horse” and hard tack.

CHAPTER XV.

UNCLE JOE AND THE ANGEL.

MORNING dawned upon another busy day for the Fleetwing's crew. The whale's head was hauled forward into the waist, the cutting spades were brought into use, and the junk was severed from the case. When the two component parts of the head had been separated, the case -- a vast oil cavern filled with spermaceti -- was hove up to the level of the planksheer, and the bailing began. Twenty-seven barrels of rich, velvety, oleaginous substance was dipped out of this strange receptacle, -- a priceless commodity, once used to anoint kings at their crowning.

After the oil-well had been bailed dry, and was cut adrift from the tackles, it sunk like a rock to the bottom of the bay, being composed of a hard oilless fibre called white-horse, which is six inches thick, and heavy as lead. Strange to say, this caverned case is the battering ram with which the great cachalot beats in a vessel's side, crushes a boat, and pummels his antagonist, whether it be a devil-

fish or a whale, — involving no more danger of injury to this pugnacious member than if it were a cotton bale.

The case having been disposed of, the huge junk was hooked to with both tackles, hoisted aboard and cut up, ready to be boiled out. The substance of this lower half of the head is also spermaceti, contained in a loose, spongy fibre, not firm and compact like the blubber on the body.

In cutting up this part of the head, a huge, pointed oak sliver, five feet long and thick as a man's leg, was dissected from the forward part of the junk. This piece of wood was supposed to come from a splintered timber of the ship "Essex," which Mocha Dick sunk in the year 1820, by breaching across her bows and cutting her down to the water. While the vessel was sinking the whale repeatedly drove his head against her side, and the crew report seeing a piece of the ship sticking from his head, at about the angle of a ship's bowsprit.

There were no irons found in the whale with the Essex's name on them. Captain Pollock's story of the sudden destruction of his ship is of great interest. He describes Mocha Dick as being so pugnacious at that time as to fight without provocation. The Essex's boats were off, fast to the three other whales in the school, over which the huge bull was presiding as *pater familias*, and they had not approached or annoyed the monster in any way, nor had they dreamed of his proximity.

He came up some little distance away, and the ship-keepers were attracted by his loud, fierce spout—like the roar of an angry bull. Scenting something wrong, the whale thrust his head out forty feet above the water, and swung his body slowly around till his eyes had swept the whole circle of vision. Then suddenly he was seen coming toward the ship, leaping along the water on his avenging way, showing intensified rage in his manner, and impressing all who beheld him with a degree of demoniac fury heretofore only seen in the attacks of the most savage land animals.

The Fleetwing's officers found ten harpoons in the whale, most of them rusted off at the outer surface of the blubber by the corrosive action of salt water. There was evidence of twenty other wounds from harpoons or lances, each scar showing white as milk, looking strange in the dark-colored blubber. The Pequod's iron and whale-line were secured, though greatly injured by three weeks' attrition of the water; also the frayed-out part of a line and iron of the English ship "Bengal," of London, which had been in the whale several months, for the harpoon was nearly rusted off. Long afterwards it was learned that four seamen and an officer were killed, and two of the Bengal's boats were stoven in the encounter.

Captain Lawrence had entrusted to Dr. Greville the task of taking accurate measurements of Mocha Dick. As discoverers of new-found lands are expected to impart the soundings and geographical

position for the benefit of the maritime world, so naturalists will demand the most minute description of this monstrous cachalot.

The full length of the great whale was found to be one hundred and ten feet. The circumference of the largest part of the body was fifty-eight feet; width of the flukes, from tip to tip, was nearly twenty-five feet. The great windpipe, which extended from the spout hole to the lungs, measured twelve yards and was thirteen inches in diameter. This vast tubular cavity was used for breathing air, not for spouting water, as most naturalists teach. The jaw was twenty-five feet long. Two feet of its forward end had been broken, and had healed while bent to the left at nearly a right angle.

While the junk was being cut up, the tryworks were lighted and boiling began on the head-oil. Even the limpid spermaceti requires to be scalded, else it will not keep sweet during the voyage. This gave the crew work enough for the day, leaving the tough, hard blubber another day to grow mellow. An old whale's oil is always harder to extract than that of young whales.

Before the first lance-flashes of the sun ushered in the new day, every branch, bough and swaying vine bordering upon the bay was alive with countless land-birds. Their plumage was so gay and bright that the green foliage seemed blossoming with many-colored flowers. A few of the small birds now burst into loud-mouthed songs, eloquent to express their

joy at the departure of night. Others of the feathered beauties — the songless majority — were seen preening and perking, flitting and fluttering, amidst the swaying foliage, intent upon displaying their personal charms.

When the sun was fairly up the garrulous parrots, and their noisy cousins, the paroquets, became most uproarious, rending the morning air with discordant shrieks. Happily, these gaudy gluttons — like their human types — find the greatest pleasure in gorging upon a fruit breakfast; eating to repletion, till they have no voice to waste on the nautical visitors. Dozing and eating, these noisy pests of the tropics remain quiet through the day.

In strange contrast to the ill-mannered birds, there sat, perched on the tops of the tallest trees, numerous birds of paradise, and other songless beauties, full of aristocratic wonder. Though curious as others of the feathered tribes, these queenly creatures expressed their surprise with grace and dignity; spending most of their waking hours in preening their feathers, and displaying their exquisite plumage to their less favored fellows.

Swaying above the ship in ever-shifting wing-clouds were countless sea-birds, enticed into the harbor by the savory whale smell. For each morsel of fat or lean thrown overboard from the junk, a hundred clamorous birds swooped down with folded wings — like an hundred arrows shot at one target — becoming a heaped-up mass of feathers, squabbling

like starved furies for each mouthful cast upon the water.

With commendable show of disgust, the wondering land-birds looked upon this rude accession of sea-birds as an intrusion to be resisted with beak and talon. As the big intruders winged their way up past the tree-tops, the spiteful little warriors flew at them and lit upon their backs, attacking fearlessly, as a kingbird fights a crow.

The ship was so immured amidst the foliage that the wind did not reach her till the morning trades acquired full strength. Then the cool breeze overreached the swaying tree-tops, refreshing the bay, and deepening the muffled roar of surf on the windward shore.

With the return of daylight, Crawford and his companion of the previous night-watch acquired courage to relate the story of the Mermaid. The recital at once created a most vivid interest. But few on board had ever seen this most wonderful of the ocean amphibia. The topic caused a lively discussion fore-and-aft. The pretty water-girl was bravely enough described by the two heroes who saw her, now grown bold under the genial protection of sunlight.

Though Tom willingly reiterated his story of interviewing the mermaid, yet feeling a little shamefaced about his fright, he prudently suffered Buntline to elaborate the whole affair, for the benefit of their importunate questioners.

Dr. Greville was among the least inclined to credit the story. He believed that the men had seen nothing more than a white-faced seal, and even discredited there being such a thing as a mermaid. But there were several on board who had seen them. And it was generally believed that Crawford had actually caught one, down among the Pelew Islands, some twenty years before.

Tom had caught his mermaid with a lasso, made from the peak halyards. The nimble creature bit off the rope, and tumbled back into the water, just as Crawford reached down to seize her by her long black hair.

He represented her as having a pleasant, girlish-looking face. Several seamen, and one of the officers of the "Skipjack," were witnesses to this event, which left it beyond dispute. Weeks of subsequent fishing with shark-hooks proved unsuccessful.

After returning home, Tom visited Barnum, and obtained the correct price current for such slippery commodity. The eyes of the great showman sparkled at the thought of such a prize. He offered Tom five thousand dollars in gold for a prime article — "sound in wind and limb." And five hundred dollars for one cured for stuffing.

Before the day was ended, none of the officers believed that the men had seen a veritable mermaid. Old Ben's exaggerations about what the mermaid said and did in their interview did much to diminish the credibility of the story. It was known that the

brawny old Salt was a trifle too eloquent in sea-yarns. In fact, Ben ranked "prime" in drawing the long-bow.

But Buntline was one that could never be talked down. The more doubts expressed about the matter, the more vigorously Ben encroached upon the domain of impossibilities. Nevertheless, when it came night, the mermaid story proved sufficient inducement for Dr. Greville to participate in the coming watch.

There happened to be good excuse for the doctor. The day had been an unusually busy one for all, what with the repairing, cutting and boiling, so that his offer to take the watch till midnight was very acceptable. The night was one of awe-thrilling stillness, for the trades had died completely. Except the undefined murmur of surf on the weather shore, the droning chirp of crickets, and the occasional twittering of dreaming birds, perched near at hand on the overhanging boughs, not a truly audible sound broke upon the perfumed air.

With the exception of Uncle Joe and the doctor, not a man on the ship was awake. An hour before midnight the saintly old man came quietly from his cabin, stepped into his boat, alongside, and sculled himself out to the Bird's Nest, as he had done every night since their arrival. There, above the vine-covered coffins of his shipmates, which he made his altar, the pious soul indulged in prayer, — revelling in the heavenly joys that people the visions of Chris-

tian souls, — returning to the ship refreshed, and at peace with himself and fellow man.

Dr. Greville was something of a star-gazer, but to-night, strangely enough, he seemed intent upon delving down into the coral grottoes, now made mysterious with strange aquatic life everywhere within the ken of his eye. The water was crystal clear, and with a vertical, half-waned moon, every link of the cable chain beneath the ship could be counted as if lying upon the deck.

Daily the great anchor was cruelly crunching, lower and lower, down through the delicate corymbs of the gorgeous rose-coral into which it was dropped. These beautiful zoöphytes were seen blossoming everywhere, like garden plants, in the still water, — building upon various novel footholds of rock, or shell, or upon the older foundation coral reefs, — and were architected by smaller, frailer, and distinct species of polypi.

While the doctor thus sat brooding, gazing in delicious revery down upon the sea-bottom, there came a new cadence, creeping softly upon his highly attuned ear. It was not the low, mournful adagio of the surf, nor any other sound that he had previously heard. The sounds were modulated to exquisite musical tones, tender and sweet; something softer and clearer than the dreaming bird-notes from the adjacent boughs, or the tuneful chirp of the crickets on the shore.

That which he had heard thrilled on the startled

ear like a rare human voice in distant song. It came and went, again and again, till his heart beat tumultuously, so awed by the mystery. At length, after a brief pause, it again stole like a lover's lute upon the enthralled ear, with ever-increasing volume, as if about to disclose itself. The watchful physician had become all ears and all eyes, yet not a living thing could be discovered anywhere, except the numerous fishes, and some unearthly creatures in the sea beneath.

At times, during the past hour, the pleading voice of Uncle Joe at prayer was softly intoned upon the ear, but only for an instant, for the saintly soul was not one to plead loudly; and the music that Greville had heard did not come from the direction of the Bird's Nest.

A long, unbearable half hour of quiet passed. Then a faint splash on the water was detected near Lullaby Isle. It sounded as if a slender twig had been bent upward, and allowed to switch back upon the water. Dr. Greville's keen eyes were fastened upon the spot in an instant. There, to his amazement and delight, he saw the fair face of the Mermaid. She was in the water, toying with twig and vine and flower. Swimming slowly, she skirted along the edge of the little *motu*, catching at the drooping shrubs above her head, and twining a flowering vine — which she broke from its stem — about her forehead. She was as human in her actions as a shore-girl, familiar with the water, might be.

At length, after being two full minutes under the gaze of the doctor, the water-girl's attention was attracted to something on the Bird's Nest. Like a listening seal, or a more intelligent sea-otter, she raised nearly half of her body out of water, seeking to scan the bay. Satisfied, or startled, the pretty creature sank quickly back beneath the surface and disappeared. For the next half hour nothing more was discernible to ear or eye.

When Dr. Greville's patience had become quite exhausted, a sudden exclamation from Uncle Joe caught his attention. There among the water-shrubs of the Bird's Nest was seen the curious water girl. She had climbed the bank and seated herself on the *motu* to observe the mute, black patriarch, whom she took for one of the ungainly animals from the sea-bottom. She had been discovered, and in turn had been taken for a supernatural creature,—whether devilish or divine, remained to be seen.

Uncle Joe's blatant outcry had scared the mermaid, who dropped softly back into the water and disappeared for the night, probably much the more frightened of the two. It is singular that such brave souls—men fearless to encounter any physical danger—become timid and unmanned by the slightest contact with what they deem supernatural. Dr. Greville remained up, instead of calling the watch, curious to hear Mr. Bailey's version of seeing the mermaid.

Uncle Joe stepped quickly into his boat, kept

moored by the opposite bank, seized the long steering oar, and sculled more briskly than usual back to the ship. It was apparent to the doctor, by the nervous strokes of the oarsman, that the pious soul was a trifle too energetic for one who trusts body and soul to the hands of the Lord.

As Greville did not wish to disclose what he knew of the affair, he bethought how he should question the old man about his adventure on the *motu*. As Uncle Joe approached near the vessel it was noticed that he shipped in his oar a trifle too previous, yet the boat reached the ship. As she glided along to her station on the larboard side the old man caught up the boat's warp, and climbed quickly up into the fore chains, casting back many furtive glances at the water below and the island astern.

When he met the doctor on the quarter-deck, Mr. Bailey endeavored to pass quietly into the cabin, as usual upon these occasions, as he did not wish his spiritual communion impaired by talking with any one; but Greville's curiosity was too much aroused to submit to his more delicate dictates.

Calling to the white-headed whaleman to come aft with him, when the two were seated by the taffrail the doctor put the question squarely to his companion :

"Well, Uncle Joe, did you hear that sweet-voiced singing an hour ago?" The one great, soft

eye of his auditor expanded larger than ever, as he replied in a subdued voice, while casting a nervous glance at the Bird's Nest:

"Tru' nuff, Docer Grevil. An' yo' bin wid dem yare angils, too, sah? Bress my stars! den dar wul be nudder glorifyin' roun' de t'rone ob Gawd. Glory, glory! sah, I's so glad." Uncle Joe caught the doctor's hand with childish delight, to think that at length his obdurate ears had caught the sound of angel voices.

"Not so fast, Uncle Joe. True, I would like to ferry over the river in the same boat with such as you, but it is not as you suppose to-night. Perhaps it may be, some time. Tell me what you have seen on the Bird's Nest. I think you frequently see angels in your hours of communion?"

"Yis, sah, I duz, sumtime. But dey am allers fa' off, up in dar kingdom cum. But ter-nite, Joe Bailey bin heah de timbrils playin', an' de angils singin' 'mong de *motus*. O Lawd! dish niggars kno' he am yo'r chile, fur-ebber mo', arter dis nite."

"What has happened this night, more than usual? Tell me all about it."

"Why, sah, doan yer kno'? Dere wuz one ob dose sweet-faced angils drop down from hebben on de Bird's Nest, an' breathed on dis yere ole brack face while I's prayin'. O glory! dis chile am so happy, sah."

"Tell me some more. I am greatly interested in all these matters, Mr. Bailey."

“Not much mo’, sah, on’y de angil spok’ de pass-word to dis yere sinner. Yis, sah, she am gimme de pass-word what will unlock de gate ob Glory. Hiah! I’s lib long nuff in dis yer world, now Mad Dick am de’d.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MERMAID.

DURING the morning watch, a few nights after the last mermaid affair, Dr. Greville was aroused from sleep by hearing Mr. Morey exclaim :

“ Go quick, and call Captain Lawrence. It's the Mermaid, sure as I live.” Said with a breathless excitement that was imparted to all who heard it.

The doctor sprang out of his berth, fairly electrified by the words. Shouting to the captain while he was slipping into his pants, he hastened to the deck, making his toilet as he went. The second mate was found bending eagerly over the taffrail, watching something down on the dimly lighted water, about a ship's length away.

There, true enough, was the same mermaid that the doctor had seen three nights before. The pretty creature was just then leaning slantwise upon the water, sinuous and graceful, as a shore-girl might recline upon a divan.

The moon, now waned to the last quarter, was just rising over the tree-tops, and being at the back

of the mermaid, presented her shaded face in profile to the observers. The contour of the face seemed perfectly human, and when thus seen against a background of moonlight the lines were pleasing and finely cut. While presenting this quarter view, she showed one shapely bosom, a plump, tapering arm, and small brown hand, thrust out through her black mass of floating hair, which wholly covered her back and fish-extremity.

The officers watched the every movement of this elfin creature from the coral grottoes with emotions of delight and awe, full of wonder at her near approach to the human type. They agreed that her actions were as graceful and girlish as a land-maid's. While full of eager curiosity to examine the ship and people, yet she showed great timidity while watching her observers suspiciously over her shoulder, ever alert to spring away at the least cause of alarm.

After about twenty minutes of this close inspection at the stern, the startled creature suddenly rose up with a look of alarm, showing more than half of her body above water, though closely veiled by her long hair, and then settled quickly back beneath the surface and disappeared. The moonlight was too feeble for the eye to follow her under water, and all thought she was gone for the night.

When the officers were about to return to their berths, the little water-witch came noiselessly up out on the larboard beam. She was then seen standing

straight up in the water, with face fronting fairly to the ship, and fully illuminated by the moon. This position created a new interest for all, and drew forth general admiration of her beauty. Mingled with a look of fear and wonderment upon her sad brown face, there was a sweet, lovable expression that won upon every beholder.

The fairy creature looked so intelligent that the officers watched to hear her speak, and perhaps sing the traditional mermaid song that ancient mariners have taught to wondering ears. No one spoke except in whispers, lest he should frighten her away. At length, little by little, she began cautiously to approach the ship, as if wishing to come near enough to study the staring faces.

The interest now increased, and the watchers grew breathless with delight. At length her lips were seen to move, as if she were talking to herself. Presently she really spoke, calling in a low, sweet voice what was interpreted, "*Mo-re-te, Mo-re-te mi-ti!*" The words were distinctly enunciated, and were soon repeated in louder tones, showing greater confidence. What the meaning of her call might be the officers were debarred from knowing, for just then a great splash was heard on the opposite side of the ship. This drew the attention away from the mermaid for an instant, and when the people looked back, the sweet-faced girl was gone, and was seen no more that night.

The disappointment was great. Yet all drew a

long breath of relief, for they had been spell-bound, more than they knew, by the weird apparition just snatched from their view. Dr. Greville broke the dumb spell that had seized upon all by repeating Hood's lines to the Water Lady : —

“Alas! that moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see!”

After the officers went below Dr. Greville remained up awhile. Never before the past few nights could this man of skill and culture give credence to mermaid stories. But here was a well attested fact that dispelled all doubt. Many eyes had witnessed a young, sad-faced water-girl, winsome and beautiful, and showing something so akin to human intelligence, that Greville, for one, had looked to see her leave her aqueous element and take her place among them.

The events of the night had been so strange and awe-inspiring, and had happened among such bewitching surroundings, that to a refined soul like Greville it seemed not amiss to look for other supernatural appearances; and he now sought to still his turbulent heart-beating, that he might listen to the rustling wings of the spirit-peopled place. There is a bewildering charm about such a new-found mystery that ministers to the soul of man as might a vision of God.

Though the moon was small, there was sufficient light to glint the long, pendent leaves around the

shore with silvery sheen. The night was so still and fair, no wonder that the mermaids were abroad, spying upon an upper world so fragrant with night flowers and so witching with moonbeams. One might well look to behold the sylvan wood-nymphs come forth from the forest and people the glistening sands, and limn their fairy faces 'in the glassy bay.

From this sweet, idyllic scene Greville stole into his berth in the cabin, feeling a nearer kindred to Godhead than ever before. He could not but feel thankful that he had been permitted to witness this one visible link between terrestrial man and amphibian woman.

So completely possessed was his mind with this novel experience that he spread his mattress and pillow on the transom, where he could lie with his head near one of the stern windows. He was fully determined to nightly continue his watch for Morete, —as the sea-girl was now called,—though he appeared a little ashamed of the strong infatuation that had seized him.

The following day was spent in stowing down the oil and cleaning the ship fore-and-aft, till not a vestige of the whale or his products was to be seen. The rent in the side was being slowly built up, and another day or two would see the planksheer in place, and the outboard planking calked and the seams payed, ready for any emergency.

As the evening hour approached, the Fleetwing's

people gathered about the deck in social groups as usual. While song and shout echoed over the bay from the cheery forecastle men, another more orderly group had clustered about Uncle Joe, who was seated amidships for his evening smoke.

The old veteran had not been on deck the night before when the mermaid was seen, but his fifty years' experience of sea-wonders included many strange stories of water-girls and all other sea novelties. While sitting there, the centre of a group of steerage people, — cooper, carpenter and boat steerers, — the loved old man was eagerly urged by all to tell a dog-watch story.

Mounted upon the fife-rail, at the mainmast, his crisp white locks bared to the evening air, the grim old prophet was gazing at the stars, like one pondering the destinies of man. Both Chips and old Bungs had been urging him to tell some of his experiences with mermaids among the Pelew Islands.

Curling a long wreath of meditative smoke from his grim old pipe, which seemed to acquire its blackness from the thin, corrugated cheeks of its owner, Uncle Joe grinned a broad, benevolent smile over the group, as he cleared his throat for a talk to the boys.

“Weel, chilun, I specs dese yere marmoids wuz made ter teach de brudder man de ways ob de Lawd. Sum pussuns can’t zactly diskibber dat dere am ar Lawd.” And he cast a solemn, reproachful glance upon Chips, who was an irreligious reprobate.

“Dese yere pussuns can’t eben obsarve de angils

sittin' on de stars, an' flyin' roun' like big white goneys up aloft dar. So, brudders, de bressed Lawd jes fix up dese yere water-gals ter sho' de sailor folkes sum wissible link 'tween Gawd an' man.

"Dar's Massa Darwin; dat pussun t'inks de baboon am de fus' rope-yarn in de make-up ob brudder man. Ah, chilun, I kno' de brudder monkey am brack, like dis yere ole nig. But, white folkes, I duzen't like de tail! I spees we uns wuzn't quite like dem yere monkeys when we fus' ho' de taters in de Eden lan'; caus' de brudder monks had rudder play dan work; rudder steal dan labor by de puspuration ob de brow.

"I's quite obscure in de mind 'bout one t'ing, chilun; I can't help b'lieve dat 'fessor Darwin wuzn't kep' on gude fodder when he's young. He mus' bin kind o' puny. Dat pussun's sit-down mus' bin drefle peaked hissself ter kep preachin' 'bout dat tail ob man." The old man dropped into silence, reflecting about evolution. But the carpenter insisted upon knowing more about the mermaid business.

"Well, Uncle Joe, we want to know something more about your experience with mermaids in these parts. You know I don't believe in such critters, and I want to be converted."

"Hiah! Yis, Chips, yo' am a leedle onsartin in all yo' duz b'lieve. Jes wait till dis chile tek ar smoke, an' diskibber one ob dose yaller gals pop up in mem'ry." After a few vigorous whiffs at his black

pipe his voice emerged from the dense cloud in which he was enshrouded :

“ Sure nuf, dat’s de critter ; dat am she ; de same leedle yaller gal I’s bin seen down off the Pelews. An’, chilun, she wuz lubly ter behole. Sorry ter sez dis chile wuz ar wicked leedle niggarr in dose days. Why, brudders, I didn’t kno’ de Lawd den ha’f so well ez I did de debble.

“ Weel, de ole Pequod had bin driftin’ down ’long de souf Pelew. Joe Bailey hab de middle watch dat nite. An’ I’s bin t’inkin’ ’bout my ole brack mudder in Nan-Tucket. I’s gut frough t’inkin’ ob ole Aunty Lucy, scrub, scrub, ’mong de ole clos, — fo’ I wuz born in ar wash-tub, — an’ I’s begun ter git inter ar sort o’ webelry ’bout leedle Dinah Coon, ole Tom’s gal, up ter Bedford — yo’ all kno’ Tom Coon?

“ Weel, I’s got ’long so far in my egsspeculations, smok’n de pipe, an’ wuz jes wish’n I kno’d zactly wheder dat lubly Dine wud ebber lub dis niggarr, when, sho ! my stars ! ef dar wuzn’t dat werry Coon gal’s yallar face down in de water, wid ar tail onter her, jes like ar porpus.

“ O lorry, lorry, chiluns, dar wuz mo’ kinks untied in dis yere niggarr’s ha’r dat nite dan yo’ kno’s ob. Truf, chilun, ebbry word, sure pop. An’ I’ll teld yer nudder fac’, happen dat time. Dis brack pussun useter be kin’er eb’ny cullud in de face fo’ dat nite ; but, chilun, I’s gut so skeered den, dat I yam allers bin quite ar spec’ble culler ebber since.”

The uproar of laughter and hilarious shouts caused

by this piece of witticism, uttered in sober earnest, as Uncle Joe always related his stories, so greatly increased his audience that the old man hastily dismounted from his perch on the fife-rail, went to the rail and shook the ashes from his pipe, and retired to his stateroom.

Though the talk about mermaids was abruptly broken off in the amidship coterie, it had the effect to start a conversation on the same subject among the officers aft.

Captain Lawrence had previously expressed his belief that he had seen legs, and real human feet, beneath the long, waving hair of the mermaid. This conviction was not confirmed by other eyes. And so far as previously known only the caudal extremity of a fish was allotted to mermaids.

True, they have often been known to give utterance to something like the human voice in song. But the sea-otter can do this to perfection, when dandling its baby in arms. Its lullaby is accompanied by pleasurable maternal actions, as appropriate as a human mother's. This whalemén often witness in the far northern seas. Not being able to agree in the argument about legs, the topic reached into a more ethnological discussion, by the captain's question :

“ Now, Dr. Greville, in what scale of ethnology do you place these little water-witches? The charming face that we saw last night has haunted me through the day, and I would like to know some-

thing more of this little triune nondescript — a being fish, flesh and human.”

“Really, Captain Lawrence, you have propounded a difficult question. I quite believe that Uncle Joe has the right notion: that mermaids were probably created to help the human intelligence to a better conception of the higher, intermediate life between God and man.”

“Yes, I agree with you, that visible evidence does help us to more fully believe in the invisible conceptions that we all love to cherish, of spirits in the spirit domain above and around us.”

“It certainly does. I spent a great deal of time thinking out that question last night.”

“And may it not be, Doctor, that there is a condition of progressive evolution going on before our very eyes? For I still feel certain that I saw the outline of shapely limbs attached to the little girl-fish. And once I felt almost sure that I could trace tiny little feet also.”

“You must be mistaken, Captain, about that pedal termination. Morete probably has a tapering, terminal body and a graceful pair of flukes like other mermaids. I am loth to believe in this evolution business, as antedated by its adherents.”

“But, Doctor, it certainly serves to tickle one’s fancy about our own final ripening into the angel form in the great hereafter.”

“Ah, well,” said the unregenerate Braybrook, who had no patience with attempts at profound

reasoning, "I have cruised over the world a good deal in the past thirty years, and never believed in mermaids or angels either till last night. Now I believe in both on um."

"You're progressing rapidly," said Greville, with a laugh.

"Perhaps so. But to tell the truth, I dreamed last night of going down into a coral cave courtin' that little midget. And I saw some queer people down there."

"I hope the grog was good?" queried Morey, bound to take the matter as a joke.

"Yes, it tasted tolerably well, considering the leakage likely to occur in tapping under water," replied Braybrook, who, though in earnest about the dream, liked to indulge in sailor jokes.

"When you get 'nother invitation, just take a friend along with you," continued the second mate.

"No you don't! Three is one too many in sparking. But truly, if Morete will accept me, I'm ready to take my water-tacks aboard and cruise with her during the rest of my days."

"I think," said the captain, "that the pretty water-maid has turned all our heads, and if she comes a few times more she'll entrap all of our hearts. I haven't dreamt of her, but when aloft to-day, sweeping my glass about the harbor, I frequently thought I saw her appealing little face,—once, under the water-vines of Lullaby Isle; and again, among the flower-shrubs on the little *motu*

itself. Finally I began to think I was getting moony on the subject, and came down from aloft and took a nap as the best method of getting rid of a mesmeric delusion."

After considerable more talk in this vein Captain Lawrence ordered the mate to stop the fiddling and dancing on the forecastle and set the anchor watch for the night, and in ten minutes more not a whisper was heard forward of the main-mast.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WEIRD NEW MYSTERY.

A BUSY week passed during which nothing more was seen of the mermaid. But a strange new mystery had come to occupy the attention of the Fleetwing's people for the past three nights. A ghostly Fire Cross now nightly lit up the bay, shining among the tree-tops on the eastern shore. It was a weird, flickering, phosphorescent gleam of blue and green, that not a soul on board could account for.

When this unaccountable phenomenon made its first appearance it was looked upon without much apprehension, for it was thought to be something of the nature of a "Will o' the Wisp," which sailors are familiar with during eastern storms. The bogey things flit about the boom-irons and cling to the mast-heads, creating great terror among the most superstitious. But now that the Fire Cross had repeated itself the third night, it aroused all the latent superstition of the crew, and solemn predictions of evil became the whole burden of their talk.

Since the nights had become moonless the sky was more overcast, and the evenings set in earlier than usual. The ship was so embowered among the trees that the darkness of a cloudy night became impenetrable. Launch a boat and pull ashore in the vicinity of the mysterious light, and the fiery emblem disappeared wholly from view of the searchers. Shout back to the ship that the ghostly symbol was gone, and the shout repeated itself in a hundred echoes through the forest, ending in a muffled roar, which wrung many a wild shriek from the parrots roosting among the trees.

This affair had the effect to wholly hush the dog-watch songs of the crew, and plunge the more loquacious of the story-tellers into ghostly yarns that greatly added to the growing uneasiness on board. Even the Congo cook and the mulatto steward, the most constant of the fiddlers and singers, shook their woolly heads mysteriously, even in the sunlight of noonday, and remained mute as the songless birds of the forest. It was an event which the sailor croakers seized upon as opportune for spinning their worst yarns about spooks and spectres, for they gloated over the opportunity to intimidate the less superstitious of their shipmates, until there was a general quaking of hearts among veterans who would deem it frolic to tackle a fighting whale.

As twilight deepened into darkness the several groups about deck were disposed nearly as usual. Captain Lawrence, the doctor and most of the

officers were sitting or sauntering upon the cabin deck with every disposable spy-glass in hand, earnestly discussing the one universal subject of interest. With the exception of Mr. Bailey, all the officers had endeavored to maintain some opinion about the matter. As the white-headed prophet now approached the group, the captain again sought to draw him into the discussion.

“Mr. Bailey, you haven’t given us your opinion, yet, about the Fire Cross. I notice that you keep pretty quiet about it, but you look a trifle wise, as if you had a word of wisdom on the matter.”

The decrepit old man hobbled slowly up the steps leading to the top of the cabin and seated himself on one of the spare boats, while he took a long, vigorous puff at his black pipe, cautiously deliberating just how much of his mysterious visions he ought to disclose at the present time.

“Weel, Cap’n, dat ar Cross am ar holy umblum, sah. ’Tain’t nuffin ebil. De Lawd’s han’ am in it, sah, sure pop. Dat am de star ob Besslehem fo’ de chilun ob de Fleetwing.”

“But what is it? That’s the point which we want to get at.”

“Law ar massy, sah, I spec it yam phosphus. Burns like um. ’Taint nuffin else; doan yer tink so, Cap’n?”

“But how comes it to take the exact shape of a cross?”

“Dat’s whar de han’ ob de Lawd cums in, sah.

Spouse dat wuz de crescent, sted ob de holy cross. Den, sah, dis chile wud sez, luke out fo’ de debble, or de wicked Turk. Dat yere Cross am de simbul ob gudenis, an’ de han’ ob Gawd am in it, sah.” The old man warmed up so easily on the subject, that the captain probed away with considerable hope of finding out what he knew, for no one doubted but Uncle Joe could tell about it if he would.

“Tell us truly, Uncle Joe, have you had a clear revelation about the Fire Cross? The men are getting so frightened that I fear we shall have to leave port before we are repaired. So you must help us out all you can.”

“De truf am, Cap’n, dat my ’pinion am cordin’ ter de conwieshun ob prayer. It yam bin made ’nown ter dis chile dat Gawd A’mighty didn’t save we uns frum Mad Dick fo’ nuffin. De Lawd yam stil watch’n ober de deah chilun. An’ Gawd’s promis now am too ’bundant ter teld.” The mate here broke rudely in upon this kind of argument.

“Look here, Dr. Greville hasn’t fully explained his theory yet; at least, not down to the level of my understanding,” said Braybrook, joining in the conversation. “Uncle Joe is too mystical for my notion. I’d like to know why that confounded thing don’t burn all night? It begins at eight, slows down about midnight and dowses the glim at one o’clock.”

“Yes, that is the point which we all want to solve,” said the captain. “My notion about its

only burning during the ozonic tides don't seem to cover the ground. Now, Doctor, you have the floor."

"Well, gentlemen," rejoined Greville, "I'll explain more fully. That question taxed me greatly at first, but it seems clear enough now. We notice that the Fire Cross glows its brightest from nine o'clock to twelve, then wanes till one o'clock, when it is extinguished. Now, according to Wislicenus, in his work on electric tides, these are the three night hours of electric flood-tide, — the hours of positive electro-atmospheric condition, — while the ebb-tide, or the electro-negative condition, becomes fully established at one A.M., when the illumination burns out for want of electric fluid to keep up combustion."

"But doesn't Captain Lawrence give just as good reasons for his ozonic theory? And why have you given up supporting his notion?" retorted Braybrook.

"The captain's theory did seem plausible. But now that we have found the time of brightest illumination and final extinction does not correspond with the ozonic atmospheric tide, the theory becomes untenable."

"How do you get at all this theoretic business about ozone?"

"Becksel teaches us — and we can easily test his theory for ourselves — that the flood-tide of ozone culminates at ten o'clock in the evening. Still the Fire Cross gleams on brighter than ever. No doubt

that ozone is an auxiliary aid, for neither electricity nor phosphorus will burn freely without the oxidized gases to facilitate combustion."

"Well, Doctor, that seems to be plausible theory. But one question more: What makes us all so depressed and full of evil apprehensions when that ghostly thing dowses the glim?"

"That's easily accounted for," replied the doctor, who knew that other eager ears were listening and sought to relieve the gloomy condition of the crew. "Ask any nervous old lady at what hours she finds most trouble to sleep; she will tell you from one o'clock till three, when the negative electric tide predominates, for then human vitality is at its lowest diurnal ebb. Isn't that so, Captain Lawrence?"

"Yes, no doubt of it. Doctor, your technique is so admirably maintained that I shall have to give up my ozone problem."

"A word more to make it clear to Mr. Braybrook's mind. However much nervous persons may kick about in the morning watch, during the electric ebb, they find no trouble about going to sleep after five in the morning. You must remember many times in your life when this negative condition has depressed you?"

"No. I can't remember an instance when it ever before affected me," replied the mate.

"Oh yes, you can. Look back to some hot, sultry afternoon, when a thunder-storm was brewing, and recollect how uneasy and depressed you and every-

body else were till the storm burst and brought on a positive electric condition, when everything in nature was relieved as by magic."

"Ah yes, I can think of lots of occasions of that kind. Is there any method of testing the amount of ozone in the atmosphere?" continued the mate, bound to unearth everything connected with this problem.

"Oh yes, and I'll experiment for you any day. Ozono-metric paper, for test purposes, is prepared by soaking the paper in a solution of iodide of potassium made with starch-water. This test paper is very sensitive to the presence of ozone, which turns it a blue-brown color, more or less, according to the predominance of this gas."

"What's the nature of ozone?"

"It is intensified oxygen, and may be made by passing electric sparks through the air, or by oxidizing phosphorus in moist air. It is found in all pure air, most in the altitudes, less at the sea-level. It is deficient about swampy grounds, for there it is expended in oxidizing the carbonic acid and other impure gases."

"Then a great abundance is conducive to health?"

"By no means; that is a popular error. An excess of ozone is injurious to a person in robust health. It seriously affects the respiratory organs and induces bronchitis, sore throats and all the eruptive diseases; scarlet fever and the like troubles always follow snow-storms when ozone abounds.

Too great a deficiency of it engenders a prevalence of gastric diseases. So you see that *too much* of even a good thing is bad. That is one of the great facts to be learned in administering medicine."

"O ho! Then instead of taking a gill of glaubersalts, in future, I'll be satisfied with a spoonful."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GREVILLE AND THE WATER-GIRL.

JOSE VERD and the bow boat's crew had the night-watch. One by one the officers had smoked out their pipes and gone to their berths. The deck watch were gathered about the Portuguese boat-steerer amidships. With the exception of Dr. Greville the quarter-deck was deserted. Lighting a fresh cigar, the doctor sat reclining on the cushioned seat at the stern.

With face upturned to the stars the brooding physician ejected his fragrant smoke out into the darkness and watched it gyrating upward with an absent, vacant stare. He had remained up during this midnight hour with an evident intention that he chose not to disclose. Whatever his purpose might be, the cultured man had seemed a little abashed when questioned by the officers, — like a boy who shrinks from making known his first love, — for he was actually taking the trouble to half deceive himself with a well assured look of vacuity.

The bay was shrouded in a dismal gloom having

no outlook but the star-flecked canopy. While the darkness was impenetrable along the shore, it was slightly relieved about the ship by the mirrored stars in the middle of the bay, which flashed back their reflected rays into the face of one peering down into the inky water.

Dr. Greville was of a speculative turn of mind and liked well to indulge in night communion with the spirits of the place, dreaming dreams that were not wholly dreams. Occasionally the recumbent man rose eagerly up from his leaning posture and deliberately blew a long, meditative smoke-puff out over the stern, with the aspect of one having some solemn purpose in view ; as in Cathay one may observe the Joss-worshipping Celestial light his colored incense-paper and blow the fragrant smoke out over the dark river when in the Bocca's mouth, or while passing the numerous shrines in the Ly-Moon passage.

What the doctor expected to see when he thus gazed out so eagerly into the Plutonian blackness, he probably would not have been willing to tell. Suddenly, for the twentieth time, he was seen leaning out farther than ever over the stern, with an appearance of intense excitement. Leaning and listening, his neck stretched out into the gloom, he held fast to the spanker guy, with only the half of his legs hanging inboard.

The man's breath came short and quick, showing profound agitation. His keen ears had caught the

sound of gentle breathing down on the black water, and he had heard the rhythmic strokes of a stealthy swimmer approaching the ship.

Presently the lambent glow of twin starbeams shone out through the inky blackness, thrilling the heart of the startled man like an electric spark. What he saw proved to be the bright eyes of the little mermaid, swimming cautiously in to the stern. When almost within reach of the rudder the little water-girl stopped, and fixed her large bright eyes timidly upon the doctor's kindly face. After a deal of pantomime, and dumb motion of her lips, she at length murmured, "*Mo-re-te, Mo-re te mi-ti,*" in a soft, tinkling tone, musical as a meadow brook.

Pausing in the dim glare of light shining from the stern window, Morete tossed back her head, and parted the thick black hair from her forehead with a very girl-like movement. Standing upright in the water, she easily kept herself in this position by some gentle motion of her caudal extremity.

Having fixed the hair to her liking, she stretched up her tiny hands to their utmost reach, with supplicating gestures to the doctor, whose face beamed down upon her with an earnest sympathy that won her confidence at once. There was an almost human expression in the face of the little sea-girl, which, together with the piteous appeal in her eyes, smote the beholder, and ought to debar the most hard-hearted wretch from using rude methods to capture one so witching and gentle as she.

Thus, for a long half-hour, these two remote types of God-life sought to communicate as best they could. Though mute in their appeals as the sun and the flower, yet each momentarily won the confidence of the other. The cultured man sought to lavish his human sympathy upon this inferior link of life confronting him from the aqueous world, as might one of the ethereal God-people lean beneficently down from the rim of the sky and vouchsafe an answer to Greville's own human appeal.

At first the doctor feared to move, almost to breathe, lest he should frighten the shy creature away. At length, feeling convinced that he had won her confidence, he ventured to reach down his hand, proffering a gentle welcome. Even this friendly movement startled her away for a few times. But after she had repeatedly returned without harm, then her girlish lips ventured to repeat her pretty bird-talk — “*Mo-re-te, Mo-re-te mi-ti*,” louder than before.

Though the little water-girl was evidently yearning for companionship, yet when the doctor now made an effort to lower himself down nearer to her by the guy, the alarmed creature sprang away with some swift strokes of her hands and a vigorous motion of her tail. But when Greville addressed her with magnetic voice and in quiet, cooing words, he soon allayed her fears, and she gladly returned, though trembling with unavoidable apprehension, that showed in every feature.

When she finally took her previous position near the rudder, it was with many appealing gestures and startled looks—as if begging that the doctor would not harm her.

At brief intervals the boisterous tones of the fore-castle men greatly aroused Morete's fears. On such occasions the lithe creature would elevate her willowy form half out of water, disclosing a symmetrical bust, shapely as the marbles of Praxiteles. With wide eyes and dilated nostrils, she peered quickly about; then, if not wholly satisfied with her survey, she would sink under the surface and disappear, much to the doctor's regret.

Presently, after a moment's absence, she would appear out on the starboard beam, fifty yards away. Coming quietly to the surface, with just her eyes above the water, Morete would carefully inspect the forward part of the ship, till satisfied that nothing threatened her. She would then dip under water and glide swiftly back to her former place, greeting the doctor with a smile. Again she resumed her chattering, not a word of which was intelligible to her auditor—which seemed greatly to distress the little fish-girl.

What a meeting was this for an aspiring man of science, thus coming face to face with a half human habitant of the sea; a mysterious new-found fish-type, almost unknown to the great naturalists of the world. The doctor was fast becoming enchanted with the beautiful girl; and his heart had

already gone out to her with something near akin to love. Morete seemed so intent to make known her wishes to him, that he began to believe she was endeavoring to divulge some longed-for secret of her habitat in the coral caves below.

The interview had gone on till the water-girl seemed to have lost all fear of being entrapped, and her comely face was now beaming with gladness and trust in her companion. Greville had stretched down over the stern to Morete till their hands almost met. The warm breath of the beautiful girl was upon his face, and her great love-beaming eyes were looking into his with confidence and affection.

How the interview might have ended none can tell. Suddenly one of the night-watch came aft and saw the doctor's situation, without comprehending why he was there. Instantly the well meaning man seized hold of the trowsers, with a loud exclamation and a rousing pull inboard; to which Greville replied, with fierce, vehement undertones, bidding the man begone.

The rough voice of the one and the fierce tones of the other frightened Morete, and broke the witching spell. With a cry of surprise and a look of alarm she sprang backward and swam reluctantly away, her sweet face turned back over her shoulder, gazing sadly at the doctor, and her long masses of hair trailing on the water like a pair of raven wings.

The disappointment was more than the doctor could bear. He was like one who had discovered an

open rift through the bending sky — meant only for him to behold — through which he was viewing the revelations of the other world, when a rude hand plucked at his garments, and called him back to mundane things again.

With a sigh Greville reluctantly retired to the cabin, enriched by an experience vouchsafed to but few men of science during a lifetime. During the interview his feelings had undergone a wide, unexplored range of emotions. How varied and far-reaching his aspirations had been aroused, required time for him to determine. He could not discard the conviction that he had received a revelation disclosed to but few, and he meant not to make known to any one what had happened. This certainly implied that the man's heart had been touched more than he knew — for most we hide what most we prize.

Night after night passed, with many hours of patient, unavailing watching. This engendered heart-sick murmurings, when the doctor remembered that himself had driven away his beautiful Morete, by gruff tones which the timid creature thought were addressed to herself. Reflection could not but increase his regrets, for he believed that with opportunity he might have learned her language, and in time have questioned out the buried lore of many Ocean mysteries.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MONSTROUS SEA-BEAST.

[IN addition to the carpenter's gang, working on the stoven side under the mate's supervision, the second mate and most of his watch were kept busy ashore during the day, making an observatory among the tree-tops for astronomical purposes. It was also to be used as a "crow's-nest" in looking out for whales, as well as for taking latitude and longitude, to determine the exact position of the island.

Three tall cocoa-nut palms growing near together at the entrance of the bay were selected for this purpose. The tops of the palms were drawn together by ropes and a strong platform made, where a party of six could sit or stand under the cool shade of the inumbrate leaves, one hundred feet above the sea-level.

Two of the trees were rattled up to their tops, — like the shrouds of a ship, — which made the observatory easy of access. A sea-chest was secured on the platform, in which was kept one of the ship's

chronometers, two quadrants and a sextant, convenient for taking daily observations, and with the hope of securing some good lunars when the moon again made her appearance.

As night drew on, the weird light of the Fire Cross again gleamed over the bay, and the harmless symbol caused more uneasiness than almost any tangible danger could do. There was a hum of excitement throughout the ship, especially among the sailors. For while the officers were greatly mystified, they knew the strange illumination to be harmless, and believed the mystery would yet be solved.

Led on by the more superstitious of their number, the crew had fully adopted the belief that Satan was at the bottom of the affair, and that a flaming cross could only emanate from dead men's bones. This was the text of Tom Crawford's last oracular talks.

Tom was the oracle of the fore-castle, and though not quite as superstitious as English Bill and Buntline, he and they were a bad lot in such an emergency.

Having finished his after-supper smoke, Tom mounted to the top of the Samson post, ready to harangue his illiterate fellows and impress them with the creed which they were to swear by during the next twenty-four hours. Every soul from the fore-castle was gathered about the big, burly seaman with thoughtful, terrified face. Even the several wounded men were on deck, now nearly convalesced from their wounds. "I say, maties," shouted the tawny-

chested fellow. "Durn my toplights, ef thet ere hobgoblin ain't burnin' up brighter than ever."

"What'll cum uv it, Tom, ef we uns don't board our tacks, an' git out o' this?" asked Buntline.

"Ah, Ben, thet man-killin' thing means evil ter sum o' ther boys."

"What fur, Tom? We uns hev dun nuthin' 'ticular, hev we?" Ben's question voiced the thoughts of many another innocent old sinner.

"Yee am ar wicked set o' skipjacks. An' no wonder sum o' yees am gittin' colico-culered round ther gills. I mought be skeered myself ef I didn't cum frum ar Christian people." Thus the senior sailor of the Fleetwing found a method to bolster up his courage for public inspection.

"Why don't yer hev ar talk wid ther cap'n 'bout it, Tom? You'n him hev sailed togedder so long, he'd do 'bout ez yer told him."

"Hang it, Ben, I hed orter speak ter thet Ole Man. He's much too delibrit in shinglin' up ther side uv ther ole barkie."

"Thet's so," growled English Bill; "we able seamen orter mutiny, ef cap'n don't git outer this place soon. I'll be ther spokesman, ef yer sez so."

"Thet's yo'r 'pinion, am it, yer British booby? Go ahead, an' lead ther mutiny agin my cap'n; an' I'll lead ther gang ter string yer up to ther yard-arm. Why, fellers, this ere purty fruit orchid am moughty like ther parradize what me ole muther Crawford useter read 'bout in ther Bible, when I's

ar schooner-rigged boy et hum, wid ony three kites ter sail under — hat, shirt an' trowsers."

"But thet ere parradis' didn't hev ar scarecrow hung up in ther flower gardin' ter gin ar feller ther shakes?" interrogated Buntline.

"P'haps not, Ben. But they do sez thet Belzebub wuz tuck ez ar boarder, till ther Lord scorched his hide an' kicked him out."

"Brail up yer mizzen, Tom. Don't spoke so dis'specful 'bout Mr. Satan till we uns gits out inter blue water."

"O blarney! Ben, yer careen too much fur ther breeze. Stow sum cobble stones in yer bread-locker fur ballast. Ther Devil shall never shape ar course fur Long Tom ter sail by."

"Oh, belay thet, Tom! What fur duz yer keep flukin' uv it in that lingo? Blame me, ef ther deck ain't gittin' hot everywher' I put down me plantations. Do dry up an' talk 'spectable while we uns lay here." And poor old Ben got too nervous to sit or stand.

"Don't mind ole Bunt, boys. Ben lost ther crown outer his hat when young an' et made him weak in ther garrit."

It had got to be about eleven o'clock and the Fire Cross was burning brighter than ever, when the captain wound up the quarter-deck talk by giving stirring orders to the mate for the following day.

"Mr. Braybrook, put some spare hands at the

grindstones to-morrow and have all the axes, hatchets and billies ground for action in the woods, and just as soon as the repairs are completed we will cut into the trees about the Cross, and while acquiring some wood for the ship we will unearth that mystery and find out what it is perched upon that it should take the form of a cross."

"All right, sir, I'll attend to that matter with a good will; and now, as Mr. Morey looked up the mystery last night, I will take one more look before we remove the trees." Braybrook stepped to the front of the cabin-deck and shouted:

"Muster aft here, men, and clear away the lar-board boat."

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded Tom, lustily, for however much he might blow and bluster among the seamen, his was always the first voice to respond and the first hand at a pull in any call for duty. "Thet's ther talk, my hearties! Face ther music. Grapple wid ther infernal lightnin' bug, an' let us see ef blood an' muscle ain't ekal to ar ghostly blue-lite, any day. Come, stir yer stumps, boys, an' clear away our boat."

After a two minutes' pull the boat grounded on the coral sand, the grating noise of the keel causing quite a twittering among the birds roosting above. The beach was made dark as a pocket by the dense overhanging foliage. One and all scrambled ashore to make search for the Cross, and followed the mate along the beach to the west. Not a sign of the fiery

symbol was visible from any position they could reach, for they were kept from entering the woods by a thick undergrowth of thorns, briars and interlacing vines. Neither could they walk far along the beach, for suddenly they came to an impassable cavernous passage, through, under the shore of the island, to the sea beyond. This was evident from an inflowing current.

As they stood wondering at this coral archway under the shore there came a deep, dismal, souging sound that made the men cringe with fear. Heard in such a gloomy place, the wailing noise seemed very like some muffled outcry of grief. This so dismayed the men that even brave old Tom caught Buntline by the arm and drew him stealthily away toward the boat, whispering, when out of hearing of the others, in sepulchral tones :

“Mark me, Ben, I’ve ar mind thet hole am ther infernal water-gate down to ther brimstone place. Didn’t yer smell ther lucifer burning? Ugh ! thet’s ar leetle too close ter tophet fur ther likes uv you an’ me, ole Bunt.”

“Thet’s ’bout how I argufy, Tom. Folks az crooks ther wakes, like us uns, gits wise in time an’ make ar starn-board at every smell o’ brimstone.”

“Yis, Bunt, ther smell o’ lucifer am allus ar sign o’ Satan, same ez ‘Sailor’s Snug Harbor’ am ther sign o’ plenty o’ rum an’ land-sharks ter steal yer voy’ge. Ah, matey, what’s ther use o’ bein’ so pesky wicked whin yees young? Whin yer git ole,

it keeps yer pump-well full o’ bilge water, an’ turns yer sails tan-color, like ar Roosian coaster up ther Baltic.”

“Yees rite, ther’, shipmate. Blame me ef my ole sins ain’t breakin’ stowage; gittin’ res’rected, till ev’ry sin am big as ar goney. Say, Tom, what fur duz ther Lord let ar feller carry sail so whin he’s ar kid?”

“Why, Ben, it am ar faderly way fur Gawd ter gin ev’ry craft ar free sheet an’ ar bully breeze, jist ter test ar chap’s p’int’s o’ sailin’. Then, ef yer don’t mind ther logarithms in ther good book, yer runs aground in shoal places, — an’ shoals am sins, yer kno’, — an’ bumpin’ on um sort o’ hogs ther keel an’ strains ther top-hamper. Thet’s ther ’hole law an’ gawspel on it.”

“Ah, yis, Tom, yer hev ’splained it nicely, ’caus yer had ther ben’fit uv edication; but my ole mammy kicked ther bucket whin I’s small, an’ I tuck ter fishin’ soon ez I quit nussin. Then ther Lord let me carry sail too much, till I sprung my masts an’ split my taup’-sil, an’ I’s bin driftin’ — like are water-logged hulk — ever since. Driftin’ so long thet ther Lord’s furgut ole Ben, an’ I spose I shall drift, drift, with never ar helpin’ han’, till I scorch my lee-leaches tryin’ ter weather ther brimstone port.”

“Yis, ole messmate, it am tough sailin’ fur us all. Don’t I wish I could tack back, an’ be ar small boy, as I useter was; livin’ wid ole muther Crawford at ther South Cove. Ah, Ben, I feels her soft han’ on

my ole head now, strokin' me brown locks. An' I hears her sayin', 'Tommy, dear Tommy, 'member ther Lord thy Gawd, an' ke'p his cumman'ments.' Them's her last sailin' orders ter little Tommy. An' I've nailed 'em to ther mast, Ben, an' ther' they is. An' sink ur swim, them orders an' ole Tom will go down togedder!"

"As fur me, matey, I'd too hard ar row ter hoe ter wish ter live it all over agin. All ther advise leedle Benny ever gut, in them days, wuz frum ther land-sharks: 'Make any port in ar storm, Benny,' sez they. An' them durned sharks kep pipin' ther lingo so of'en inter willin' ears—allus stickin' ter ther same text—thet ole Ben hev nailed their lesson to ther mast, an' we'll go down togedder. Fur ther's no manshun in ther sky fur me, Tom."

The hoary-headed cronies wept repentant tears while leaning on each other's shoulders in the darkness. The shriek of a parrot above them recalled the men's thoughts to their surroundings again.

"Ugh! ain't it black, though? Why duzen't ther mate haul his wind out o' this 'ere?" ejaculated Crawford, with a shudder.

"Ther bogies am gittin' ez thick in ther darkness ez cockroaches in ar bread kid," rejoined his companion.

"Do yer kno', Ben, thet I'm wish'n ole Joe Bailey wuz 'ere,"—an epidemic of piety having seized Tom for the moment.

"What good could ther ole Wizard do yer, Tom?"

“Why, gawspel folk duz say thet pray’n am ar kind o’ binnacle lite in dark times. Them’s ther sort o’ conundrums thet ole muther Crawford useter cram inter my gizzard, whin I’d bin spearin’ cats ’sted uv goin’ ter skule ter ole marm Folger.”

“Well, I wudn’t min’ takin’ ar trick at pray’n ef it am ar sure cure. What do yer think, Tom?” said Buntline with a hopeful voice.

“No use, Ben. Ther Devil’s gut ar mor’gage on ev’ry timber in yer ole hulk,” replied Tom, with a view to self-preservation.

“Yees rite, matey. Sorry thet I owned up. I’m gittin’ awful skeered fur doin’ thet, wid ther Devil’s dungeon rite under our lee.” And the breath of the old croaker came loud and fast with a new fear.

During the time that Tom and Ben were groping about the boat in the ghost-haunted darkness, the mate, with others of the crew, was hovering on the brink of the cavern, endeavoring to work through the tangled vines into the woods. Braybrook had succeeded in getting a glimpse of the Fire Cross through the dense foliage, but further use of knives in cutting away the under-brush proved too laborious, and the toilsome task was abandoned.

While the men were at work, Billy Livingston, the after-oarsman, had been standing on the shore at the cavern’s mouth, curious about the strange noises heard in under the over-arching shore. When the mate was leaving, Billy called his attention to the

noises. Braybrook and Hoogley came to the cave, and stood listening beside the boy while he re-stated what he had heard.

Their attention was soon attracted by a harsh, grating noise deep in under the mouth of the cave, accompanied by a strange, gurgling sound, like that of a drowning man. It was as if two rough, sandy surfaces were abrading each other, or, perhaps, one sandy surface rubbing briskly against the coral wall. Whatever it was, it jarred the shore where the men stood like the vibrations of an earthquake.

Even the mate showed uneasiness at this unaccountable phenomenon, and led the way back to the boat, bidding the men to follow. They obeyed with alacrity, greatly quickened by their fears; all but Billy, who lingered a moment, having discovered something new at the mouth of the cave. He called to his shipmates before they were fifty feet away, exclaiming in a boyish, joyful tone :

“ Wait, wait ! Come back here, boys. Here’s a big fire-fish, or something, in the cave. Oh, it’s splendid ! ”

All turned and looked back and saw the dusky form of the boy. He stood facing them with his back to the cavern. As they approached within twenty feet of him, they were just in time to see something reach up out of the submerged cave, twenty feet above the boy’s head, appearing like a gigantic serpent fifty feet long, gleaming with a blue-green flame color that fairly illuminated the spot where the boy stood.

With one accord every voice shouted to Billy to run; but before the boy could comprehend the necessity for so doing the enormous snake-like creature reached down and snatched him up by the head and shoulders, and drew itself quickly back into the cavern's mouth.

One wild shriek rang out over the bay, terrifying the people aboard the ship, and announcing to the mate that something dreadful had happened.

Braybrook came running back, to find that brave little Billy was gone forever. A sense of horror crept over them all, to think that such a fiendish monster was living in their midst.

Billy was a bright, curly-headed boy of fifteen, loved by all on board. When the mate reached the cave nothing was to be seen but Billy's hat tossing on the phosphorescent water, and floating slowly out into the bay. Only that, and the rumbling, grating, gurgling noises made by the monster far in under the coral arch, could be distinguished, as evidence of the tragic event that had occurred.

As there was no place on the adjacent shore where the men could defend themselves from a similar attack, the mate hurried the crew to the boat, pushed off from the shore, and pulled quickly to the ship. Young Livingston's death was sad news to his shipmates, fore-and-aft, for the boy was a general favorite with all.

Captain and officers held a council, and it was deemed necessary to make immediate preparations

to resist an attack from this unknown, serpent-like monster. For all believed that his taste of blood would induce him to make further search for man-food.

The cutting spades were laid out on the top of the cabin and top-gallant forecastle, with a short spade placed in each of the tops. Twenty muskets were loaded with buckshot; the two swivel guns were loaded with a double handful of bullets and mounted on the monkey-rails of each quarter. A charge of grape-shot was put into the six-pound cannon, and a port-fire made ready for use.

A boat's crew watch was then set, headed by an officer, instead of the boat steerer, with orders to call out all hands if anything unusual appeared. It was nearly one o'clock before quiet was restored, and the crew went to their berths.

About an hour after, Mr. Antoine's attention was aroused by a harsh, grating noise in the direction of the Fire Cross, as if the coral reef was being ground to powder. This noise was followed by a sudden glow of phosphorescence, seen at the mouth of the cavern, which soon increased, till the dense darkness of the place was lit up by a sheet of phosphoric flame—as when a shark or a whale flounders in the water during an east wind, and illuminates the sea.

In another minute out rushed some monstrous creature, big as a whale, enveloped in flame, like a huge salamander come to burn up the bay. He made his way round the southern crescent of the

harbor. Sometimes he was swimming, with his broad back level with the water. At times he would stop, and remain motionless, as if he were listening; ending by raising himself twenty feet out of water, as if to make a survey of his surroundings.

Both the officers and crew were appalled at what they saw, and it was some minutes before word was passed to call out all hands without making a noise.

Everybody came up in great excitement, and climbed into the rigging, or upon some other elevation, to watch the movements of the strange creature, till at length they were called down, and ordered to keep out of sight. What the swimming monster could be, none had determined. His size was so greatly magnified by the phosphorescent glow that his body seemed as wide and deep as the ship.

When the mammoth thing rose up out of water he seemed to have more legs than a spider; and from the fact that the water about him was thirty feet deep, and his body reared twenty feet above the surface, it was evident that his legs were fifty feet long, while his body seemed to be sixty feet in length and thirty feet in diameter.

After circling around two-thirds of the shore the great beast discovered the ship, and started directly for her. He came creeping along on his numerous legs till the water deepened enough to submerge his body, and then took to swimming, so as to keep his head above the surface. As he came near

the ship he slowed his motion, as if prompted by caution, though coming with evil intent. It was then, while in fair view of all on board, that Mr. Bailey pronounced it to be a gigantic octopus or devil-fish, the most diabolical creature known to ocean rovers. His great, glaring eyes were as large in diameter as a bushel measure, and shone with a bluish, ghastly flame that made one shudder to look upon. His beak was ten feet in length, and hooked at the end like an eagle's. Most terrible of all were his stupendous tentacles, big as the main-mast at their base, and snakey and sinuous as the trunk of an elephant.

As he came very near to the ship the water shoaled to forty feet, so that the monster could stand on the bottom with his body above the surface. He seemed very curious about the Fleetwing. After he had gazed deliberately at her awhile, lifting and lowering himself above and below the water, seeking to look in upon the deck and down upon the keel, he began to walk deliberately around her with a slow, majestic motion.

Occasionally the monster dropped his body into the water as if to spy under the ship. At such times he swam with his tentacles making a queer sort of corkscrew motion, — a reaching, twisting, clawing action, — made up of as many hideous contortions as a snake's. When the octopus came to the whale's case he stopped to paw it about, and after rolling it

over and over, finally grappled it with four of his tentacles and lifted the vast mass up to his beak. Not being able to bite into the tough white-horse, he suddenly dropped it back to the bottom and again turned his attention to the ship.

The great beast impressed every one as a creature of intelligence and fiendish cunning, and it was believed he meant to seize the vessel when he found a weak point to attack. The men had been armed with axes, hatchets and cutting spades, and ordered not to show themselves so as to attract the attention of the big-eyed creature.

After tramping around the ship the second time the monster suddenly plunged under water and crawled under the counter. He grappled the keel with some of his herculean arms and shook the ship till she trembled from keel to truck and rolled from side to side, as if wallowing in a sea-way. Feeling his way aft, the beast caught hold of the rudder, and finding it movable, wrenched it from its strong pintles and left it dangling beneath the stern.

Satisfied that there was nothing to his taste below water he came to the surface and looked about once more. Seeing nothing to attract him, after surveying the ship with one of his great green eyes, he started slowly for the outlet of the harbor. Increasing his speed as he went, at length he shot quickly out of the bay, illuminating the water like a meteor in the sky.

Every soul in the ship breathed easier when the monster was gone. The last of his fiery wake lit up the harbor several minutes after he had disappeared. No further disturbance occurred and the people were again sent below for the remainder of the night.

CHAPTER XX.

BATTLE WITH THE DEVIL-FISH.

THE evening of another busy day was closing down over the Fleetwing. It was the beginning of a much-dreaded night for the crew, in remembrance of the newly-discovered danger. Dim and mysterious gathered the twilight shadows over the thrifty isle and the beautiful bay,—a tropic scene that seemed much too enchanting to harbor aught so diabolical as was witnessed the previous night.

The whole aspect of sea and sky was calm and peaceful, while a million of twinkling starbeams were pavilioned over ship and bay. The night air was becoming sufficiently humid to absorb and dispense the delicious aroma of fruit, flowers and the spice-laden trees, which during the heat of the day hold back their exhaling fragrance in the cool coverts of the forest, where they are garnered in rich abundance, to await the coming night.

The birds, whose evening songs were quickly hushed by the gathering gloom, now chirped their

vesper hymns on the overhanging boughs, chorused by the singing lizards and the crooning crickets, — some of the beneficent influences that most serve to impress the heart of man with gratitude to his Maker in such an hour of danger.

Part of the day had been occupied unshipping and repairing the rudder, for which, luckily, there were spare pintles on board to replace the two broken ones. The rudder had not yet been shipped in its place, as it was believed that the octopus would renew his attack, and might seek to amuse himself with the steering apparatus again.

It was now the fifth night since the ghostly Fire Cross flaunted its fiery symbol among the tree-tops, creating great uneasiness among the crew, and appalling the more superstitious of their number; but since the event of the devil-fish occurred, — a sea-beast too hideous to describe, — the mystery of the Cross had become a mere side-issue, too trivial for serious consideration.

Very exciting were the numerous stories of sea-monsters related fore-and-aft during the evening. There were several on board who had encountered such sea-devils, though of a much smaller type. Captain Lawrence and Mr. Bailey thought they had seen some larger ones, at a distance, from the mast-head.

“I remember,” said Dr. Greville, after the mate and third mate told some very exciting personal experiences, “that Pliny mentions one of these

monster cephalopods, seen in the Mediterranean, whose tentacula were thirty feet long. Dr. Schewediawer also speaks of a tentaculum found entangled in a sperm whale's jaw that measured twenty-seven feet, considerable more of which was dissected from the whale's stomach, where it was half masticated."

"Yes," interrupted the captain, "but no very large ones have ever been seen in an inner sea. They belong to the deep-water leviathans. We discovered one while cruising on the off-shore ground very much larger than this unpleasant neighbor of ours. He lay sunning himself on the surface for an hour before we disturbed him. As the ship approached, we got a good observation of his body and beak. His back was a dark gray, merging into a straw-color on the belly. There were ten or twelve black, parallel stripes running the whole length of the body.

"As the ship came within an eighth of a mile of the creature he suddenly lifted his body thirty feet out of water, standing on his many spider-like legs, which bent with the weight of his body. His beak was about twelve feet long. His eyes were more than two feet in diameter, and seemed bright and knowing as a land animal's. Having made his observation, he dropped back to the surface and started ahead, propelling himself much faster than the ship sailed in the five-knot breeze."

"But what we want to know about," said the doctor, "is their fighting power. Judging by what

small ones can do, large ones must be terrific. Sir Grenville Temple relates an instance that he witnessed at Jerbeh: 'A Sardinian captain was in bathing, in plain view from where I sat. Suddenly one of his feet was grappled by a small octopus. The captain struggled to wrench his foot away, but could not. He then tried to free the imprisoned foot by the other, which was instantly seized, and both feet were held fast. The desperate man then endeavored to free the feet with his hands, which were grappled by other tentacles. The large, strong man was drawn under, crushed, and drowned by the beast, lying hidden in only four feet of water.'

"That reminds me," said Captain Lawrence, "of one of the many stories told by Captain Scammon, of the navy, in his costly volume, 'Marine Mammalia.' Said Mr. Owen: 'I was standing on the shore at Bonin Island, with my boat's crew, when they discovered a small octopus propelling himself in through the surf with his eight tentacles. He kept his body, which was four feet long, raised out of water by means of his long, flexible legs, that bent greatly under his weight.

"When he got fairly ashore, the creature became alarmed at seeing our party, and began to retreat. I left my men at their work, and ran forward and put my foot on one of his tentacles. He liberated it repeatedly, in spite of all the force I could employ on the slippery rocks. I then caught hold of one of his slimy trunks, in good position to use all my

strength, and it seemed as if the limb must be torn asunder by our united force. At length, giving a powerful jerk, I tore the little brute from the rocks. Instantly the enraged creature sprang toward me with raised head and threatening beak, his big, fierce eyes projecting from their sockets. He seized upon my bare arm with several tentacles, and then endeavored to bite me in the face with his fierce beak, which he kept thrusting out from between his forward arms.

“ ‘The cold, slimy grasp of the creature was sickening and appalling. I could hold out no longer, and called aloud for help; and had not assistance come quickly I should have been dragged into the sea. It required the combined force of the crew, with their knives, to release me from my fiendish tormentor.’ ”

“ Well, gentlemen, your cases all seem to be second-hand ones,” said Braybrook. “ I’ll give one more experience of my own before I turn in. We were bound from the Soolu Sea to the Japan ground, and made a port at Loo Choo island, hoping to get some Irish potatoes. The crop was not quite ripe, so the ship put out for a three weeks’ cruise, leaving me ashore to see that the potatoes were dug, bagged and ready to be shipped at the appointed time.

“ I made a point of bathing nearly every day in a small rocky cove; I had bathed there a dozen times without seeing anything to fear. On this particular day I was wading about from one rock to another,

knocking off mussels with my stick and eating them on the spot. In stepping down between two rocks, while trying to reach a big cluster of mussels, my leg was seized by an octopus, whose body I afterward discovered over beyond the rock, thirty feet away.

“When I pulled up my leg the tentacle was coiled once and a half around it. I tried with all my strength to slip it off, but it squirmed on still another coil; then I pounded the durned thing to a jelly with my club, but when it began to let go up come another tentacle between the rocks, and clawed on to the leg above the first one. I pounded away at the second claw, and up came two more tentacles, quick as a flash, and seized both of my legs and pulled me down so close between the rocks that I could not get at any of the tentacles with my stick.

“At that stage of the squabble the octopus crawled up over the rock to attack me with his beak, which was three feet long and hooked like a parrot’s. His eyes were big as my hat and all aflame with rage. He came at me with a pecking motion, his sharp, pointed mandible aimed at my face. I let fly with my stick and broke off the hooked part of his beak, but not till he gouged a piece out of my left arm with his lower bill; then I punched my stick into his port eye, which made the beast hiss at me like a mother goose. He finally retreated back behind the rock and did not show his head again.

“There I lay, held fast for six hours. When I moved my legs, endeavoring to withdraw them, the tentacles tightened their grip and held me firm to the rocks. The tide was at half ebb when the fight began, and it was now running flood strong, and in another hour would submerge and drown me where I lay. It wasn't a pleasant pickle to be in, for a sailor man loves best to die fighting; but there was nothing in my reach but the slippery black rocks, covered with kelp, and over beyond was the rank-smelling foe, invisible, and out of reach of my blows.

“As the tide rose so as to cover my legs, a friendly tentacle came stealing up over the top of the rock, feeling about with great solicitude to find out if I was pleasantly situated. When the slimy claw came in fair reach I let fly the club and bruised it beautifully on the sharp rock; but still another tentacle made its appearance before the crushed one was withdrawn, and I served that with two good blows before it got away.

“But the beast held fast to his grip on the legs, and the end was approaching fast. I think I swore a little if I remember rightly. I had never learned to pray and it didn't occur to me as being available in such a crisis. I got madder and madder as the tide lapped up around my waist and chilled me to the heart. I strained every muscle to rise up for one more look over the rock, just to shake my fist at the durned sea-beast and let him know that I died

game; but I couldn't budge an inch from where I stood, and I died a dozen deaths in the next few minutes.

"Just then I heard a shout. Looking behind me I saw the dear old ship running in to her anchorage. I hailed for a boat with cutting spades, and told the captain that I was held fast by an octopus. The crew worked lively, and pulled to the rescue just as the tide swashed up about my neck. There was five feet of water on the other side of the rock, but it was clear water and the tentacles ought to have been in plain sight. Not a thing could be seen of them; they were buried beneath the kelp, as was the octopus himself; but a few thrusts of the spade found the tentacles and cut them adrift, and I buoyed up to the surface like a bladder just as the water rose up over my mouth.

"The spade-cuts brought the beast into action even before I could be drawn into the boat, with the several tentacles still coiled about my paralyzed legs. The octopus seized the oars, one after another, and at length caught the boat by the gunwale and came near capsizing her; but the two spades were kept busy, and the creature was fought off and we escaped. In the morning I will show you the ten big scars on my leg made by his claws, which I keep to remember that old friend by."

The captain now interrupted the story-telling, and bade the mate set the watch and order the rest of the crew below. Uncle Joe took the first of the mid-

night watches; Captain Lawrence and the doctor continued up awhile longer; the other officers had been in their berths about an hour, and everything was quiet on the ship and about the bay.

Suddenly a slight noise was heard in the direction of the devil's cavern, which attracted all eyes, and out rushed the octopus, making his way slowly toward the ship; he came, as on the night before, all alight with a green flame, which brightened as the great beast quickened his speed. The hands were called out quickly, and every man sent to the station previously assigned him; while renewed orders were given to all not to show themselves, or in any way attract the attention of the devil-fish.

Braybrook, with spade in hand, and Long Tom and Ben to assist him, took charge of the quarter-deck; the second mate, with his boat's crew, was stationed on the port side, amidships; Mr. Bailey and his crew were on the starboard side, abreast of the fore rigging; and Mr. Antoine, with a few men, had charge of the bow. The officers and boat steerers stationed themselves so that they could watch the movements of the creature, while the men were ordered to crouch under the rail, and were mostly sitting on the planksheer. In this order they awaited the attack which all apprehended.

The octopus stopped to listen when about a hundred feet from the vessel. He had taken up his position out on the starboard beam with great deliberation, showing nothing of his previous haste and

fury. Presently he raised himself out of water to the utmost stretch of his legs, very intent to look in upon deck, showing great method and cunning in his every movement.

It was now, for the first time, discovered that the monster had ten legs instead of eight. He was therefore a decapod, — a species rarely encountered, and said to be more ferocious fighters than the octopus. The great sea-devil seemed to scent the men, or was attracted by some noise on board, for he suddenly thrust his ten-foot beak into the air and hissed like a serpent, and seemed to be working himself into a frenzy.

His next movement was to settle under water, advance nearer the ship and move forward under the bow. First he seized hold of the chain bobstay with some show of curiosity, and then tipped the ship by the bow and let her rise again at his pleasure. He accomplished no harm until he thrust up another tentacle and grappled the martingale guy, which he parted without an effort, leaving the dolphin-striker dangling about. This attracted his attention and he continued to reach up; grasping hold of the flying-jib-stay he snapped off the boom at the cap-iron, as he had probably amused himself breaking limbs from some forest tree.

Feeling his way along the keel he then began to rock the ship violently for ten minutes, till the crew had to cling fast upon whatever they could hold to; when this failed to amuse him he rose to the surface

in his old position on the starboard beam. Intent upon examining in-board, he now thrust one of his largest tentacles against the side, and slid it up over the main rail, midway between Braybrook and Bailey.

Feeling about in the darkness like a great boa-constrictor, the monster chanced upon the cook, who with others was crouched thereabouts. He clawed quickly into the negro's pea-jacket — including a quarter-section of his wool; with a hideous yell the terrified negro sprang away and leaped bodily down the main hatch, leaving his jacket and a valuable sample of his scalp clutched fast by the tentacle. Not content with escaping, minus a trifle of wool, the horrified Congo began to shout lustily from the hold:

“Holy muther! Save dis niggas. Save dis po' chile jes one time mo'. Den I'll 'pent, sartin sure!”

Apparently scenting poor Congo by the sample of wool in its grasp, with the intelligence of an elephant's trunk the knowing tentacle slid quickly down over the combings of the hatch into the blubber room, feeling savagely about for the negro, who had crawled away among the casks.

Not succeeding in finding its game among the trumpery below, the animated tentacle grappled to the mainmast, and the battle was really begun. Without making any apparent effort to show its strength, the great sea-beast easily drew the ship over on her beams with one tentacle.

Now was the time for brave men to act, before the ship was sunk where she lay. While the decapod kept up a constant glow of phosphorescence in the dark waters, still it was difficult for the officers to distinguish in the darkness aboard just where the tentacle grappled the ship and held her careened to the scuppers. Searching for it in the darkness, Braybrook and Bailey crawled along on the inner side of the bulwarks, from opposite directions, and came upon the great black trunk at the same time.

Uncle Joe was badly placed for work, but Braybrook braced himself against the main swifter and with quick, strong blows drove his spade through the sandy hide and tough sinews now drawn tightly across the rail. The snakish thing snapped with a sharp twang, as when a ship's hawser under great strain goes asunder, and the ship righted with a rush.

Seven yards of the severed trunk fell in-board, being large as the topmast where it was cut off. The claw-end let go its hold of the mainmast and tumbled down the hatchway, contorting like a wounded serpent. Squirming about among the casks it clawed up the deck by the pailful, as animated as ever. Burrowing among the blubber tubs it approached near to the half-dead Congo, whose yells again made the hold seem full of infuriated demons.

Though the ship righted at once, she continued to roll fearfully, at the risk of straining her masts. While the severed tentacle was withdrawn for hospital service, two other tentacula were instantly

sent out to retaliate for the injury. The forward one sprang up the side and grappled the rail within easy reach of Uncle Joe, who slashed away with his spade and severed five feet of the claw-end, which caused it to be quickly withdrawn; but not before another lively member of the same family had crawled stealthily up the side behind the third mate, clutched at the old man's panama and its woolly contents, allowing the old hero the briefest possible time to duck down and spring away forward out of reach. Great was Uncle Joe's surprise, when he felt anxiously about for his aged head, to find it safe and sound upon his shoulders; for the cold shiver caused by the sudden wrench and the slimy touch imparted a feeling similar to being decapitated by a guillotine.

Failing to hold fast to the peaked, black head, the gigantic tentacle seized fast to the topmast backstay, broke the dead-eye from the strap-iron, and together the trunk and stay swung out into the darkness beyond the reach of spades.

While that had been going on forward, two other massive tentacles came leaping up the side near Braybrook's position. The first to appear caught hold of the monkey-rail near Tom and Buntline. The mate and the two seamen got ready their spades for cutting, but before they could get in a blow the rail gave way and went afloat. The real danger was from the other tentacle, for the maddened beast was now doing his work with savage frenzy; he seized

upon the main swifter at the dead-eye, and before the mate was in position to act, the lanyard parted, and the swifter swung out-board far out of reach.

Here was a danger too appalling to think of! Certain destruction faced them at this moment. The cunning sea-devil had easily outwitted the best intelligence on board. With such activity as might well be expected in a creature of such malicious cunning, he had now only to tip over the ship and spill the crew into the bay, and then gorge himself at his pleasure at a human feast; taking his foreign dessert alive and kicking, in the raw, — clothes and all, as little Billy had been devoured.

It will easily be seen that the ship had been taken at the greatest possible disadvantage. Held fast by the swifter and backstay, — two of the largest ropes in the ship, the one rope pulling straight out from the topmast-head, the other from the head of the mainmast, both far out of reach of spades, — the great decapod had increased his leverage to capsize the vessel one hundred-fold.

With keen intelligence and malicious cunning the monster drew the ship steadily down to her doom. Pulling with careful, concerted action on the two ropes, he watched the towering masts and the creaking yards descend, till the yard-arms dipped in the bay; but this pleasant prelude to sinking the ship was happily interrupted for a time.

By some strange interposition for good the ship now gave a sudden lee-lurch — owing to shifting of

cargo in the hold — which sent the end of the main yard crashing down through the humped-up back of the sea-beast. Believing it was a blow purposely given him by his antagonist, as the creaking yards seemed to him a cry of pain, the anger shown by the creature was terrific. Seizing the yard-end in his hooked mandible, he wrung and twisted the stout spar, breaking it short off at the sheave-hole. There was a most malignant expression in the huge green eyes of the beast during his moments of excessive anger that struck terror to the hearts of all. And yet the great eyes of the creature had appeared mild, expressive and iridescent in his passive moments.

Most unpleasant to the ear were the occasional shrieks and the continual hissings of the mad animal after the yard pierced through his back. The beast had borne the amputation of his trunks with commendable patience, perhaps because he knew that they would grow again, as with all cephalopods.

The darkness had been too great for Captain Lawrence to see much that was going on, from his station on the cabin-deck, until the furious monster was hurt and increased the blue-green glow about him. This enabled the captain to comprehend the situation, and see the imperative necessity for action.

Knowing that there was a spade in the main-top, he sprang over on the quarter-rail and crept along to the larboard shrouds. He ascended the rigging with difficulty, as the ship was well down on her side, and

soon acquired a position to hack away at the upper end of the swifter. It required many vigorous blows to sever such a massive shroud when parcelled and hard-served with spun-yarn as a swifter.

Though in an awkward position for work the captain's blows were delivered hard and fast on the tough shroud. And need enough there was for activity, for the sea-devil had cooled down his rage and began to put forth his power with renewed intelligence. Finding that he was still within reach of the yard-arms, the devil-fish sent out one after another of his out-board tentacles, until the whole five outer trunks had clawed into the rock-bottom. He then suddenly drew his body thirty feet farther away from the ship. This gave him still greater leverage to pull the vessel down.

Before the swifter was half cut off the spade-pole broke off at the socket and the captain was left helpless for want of tools. He hailed the deck for another spade and an axe. A groan of anguish escaped him as he saw the ship steadily drawn over until her open hatchways were threatened and her unfinished deck work was already taking in water, which must end by sinking her.

While waiting for a new spade the captain discovered for the first time that the devil-fish was also holding the ship down by a forward backstay. This discovery greatly diminished the hope of saving his ship, until at length he made the further discovery that Morey was chopping lustily at the stay with a



hatchet. It was an awkward place in which to work, on a horizontal mast pulled down nearly level with the water, and his tool was none of the best for such a purpose, for the stay was hard and glassy with sun-dried tar, and the hatchet glanced from it as from a flinty rock.

Tom climbed to the captain's aid with a new spade and Buntline followed, bringing a sharp axe. Seizing the fresh instrument in a spirit of desperation, Captain Lawrence drove the tool savagely into the half-cut swifter, delivering his blows hard and fast. At the tenth stroke the pine handle broke at the socket as before. Then Buntline's axe was taken in hand and plied quickly, and soon the severely strained rope parted and fell into the bay.

When the swifter was cut the whole strain was taken by the backstay, which still held fast, though it tipped the ship by the head and relieved the inflow of water at the main hatch for the time.

From his more precarious perch on the cross-trees Morey saw what the captain was doing, and was also made aware of the captain's success by the quick vibrations that ran through the ship and her sudden tip by the bow. The brave officer became conscious that the safety of the ship now depended wholly upon him, and labored with his hatchet as never before.

Though Morey was but dimly visible to his shipmates, yet the anxious throbs of thirty hearts kept tally of his ringing blows, and thirty pairs of wide

eyes glared out through the darkness to inform themselves of his welfare.

Could it be that the combined magnetism of sixty eyes thus concentrated on the brave officer should serve to draw the great, flashing eyes of the devil-fish upon him and his doings? Certain it is, that the whole attention of the cunning beast was now fixed upon the man whose blows vibrated the rope held by the four tentacles.

That point once determined, then the four prehensile trunks began to work their way steadily up to the cross-trees. Pulling hand-over-hand, one at a time the huge claws reached upward and shortened their hold in the direction of the doomed man. At this stage a fifth tentacle was brought into play. It was the ponderous forward trunk of the right side, ten feet longer than those holding the backstay. It came fresh and nimble to its work, glided swiftly along the backs of its four companions and reached fifteen feet beyond the others, that were contracted.

As Morey paused for a moment's breath and looked up, panting from his labor, the terrified officer was struck dumb to find himself confronted by a fresh tentacle within five feet of his head. The massive claw was raised threateningly aloft, like a serpent's head about to strike its foe. It was armed with a double row of sharp, hooked fangs, which kept in constant nervous action, opening wide as if to enfold its prey, and then clutching sharply together till the horned hooks clicked like meeting rapiers.

Knowing that the destiny of thirty souls depended upon him, Morey returned bravely to his task, which seemed nearly accomplished. Faster and faster rained his blows on the glassy stay, and nearer and nearer the tentacle approached, till the click of the grasping claws tormented his ears, and swerved his fast weakening blows from the mark.

But a single hook of the vast claw tore out the back of his shirt, and Morey turned to strike one blow in defence of his life. He let drive his hatchet into the clutching thing, which closed with a snap upon the weapon and wrenched it away and let it drop into the water, leaving the brave man helpless for defence, or further work upon the stay. In this moment of desperation Morey drew his sheath-knife, knelt to make sure of his blow, and stabbed with frantic plunges at the ragged cleft in the stay. Aided by some twisting pull of the tentacles, the stay parted, and the doomed ship righted with a mighty rush, flinging the weak and exhausted man a hundred feet away into the water on the port beam.

Wild was the outcry of joy from the Fleetwing's crew, as one and all held fast as best they could during the frantic rolling of the vessel, which was left badly careened to starboard by the shifted cargo. But when the vessel had steadied so that the men could stand on their feet, all eyes were turned aloft, in search of their preserver. But the rigging was empty.

“Spring aloft and find the second mate!” shouted the captain.

Hoogley and Long Tom sprang into the rigging like monkeys, following on up to the cross-trees, where the heroic work had been accomplished. No trace of Morey could be found.

Just then a faint call was heard out on the dark water. A boat was lowered away and pulled to the rescue, and found Morey badly bruised, and keeping himself afloat as best he could. He was taken aboard tenderly and put in charge of Dr. Greville.

The gigantic decapod now seemed to comprehend that the battle had gone against him. Drawing the severed backstay in among his snarl of legs, he bit it and hooked it with his great mandible, in extremest rage, with the evident expectation of finding something upon which to vent his spleen. Then the mad beast dropped the great rope to the bottom, and suddenly rose up out of water to the utmost stretch of his legs, and shrieked like a steam-whistle. His long, hooked bill kept pecking angrily at the ship, and hissing loudly, as if about to attack her again.

Now that the ship had stopped rolling was the time to test one of the swivel guns upon him. He was about a hundred and fifty feet distant. Braybrook pointed the gun and fired, delivering the charge fairly into the body. With a louder shriek than ever the wounded beast danced up and down with surprising energy, his eyes emitting flashes of fire.

Withdrawing into the darkness, till his motions were dimly distinguished, the monster drew up his wounded trunks, one by one, and licked them with his tongue — as a cat might dress her paws. Then, with a slow, dignified movement, that was heroic under the circumstances, he swam away to the devil's cavern, and was seen no more that night.

Great was the relief at the departure of the demon. The pump well was sounded, and six feet of water found in the hold. Both pumps were hurriedly manned and kept briskly going, and it was six long hours before the hold was free.

Obtaining a lantern, Uncle Joe climbed down into the blubber room in search of the cook, as it was time to start up the galley fire for the morning meal. Carefully avoiding treading on the tentacle, which was deviously coiled among the casks and showed evidence of being as full of life as ever, Mr. Bailey and his men at length found poor Congo. The negro was stiff in the slumber of death.

He had succeeded in finding a place where the clawing tentacle could not reach his body, though his legs were exposed to the fangs of the beast. Poor old cook! his Congo fetish not appearing in time to save him, he had died from excessive fear, in the probable belief that he was partly eaten up by this terrible ghoul.

CHAPTER XXI.

ENTRAPPING SPERM WHALES.

THE new day presented a variety of problems for the Fleetwing's people: How a broken main-yard could be mended and made good as new? How a head-boom in two pieces was to be made whole, and sufficiently strong to bear the strain of an over-large flying-jib? And, finally, how a massive swifter and backstay — hard as iron — could be spliced and not be made too short for practical use?

Directly after breakfast Mr. Bailey took his boat and went in search of the lost shroud and backstay. The water was so clear that they were easily found. By the aid of a grapnel the crew fished them up and one by one they were drawn to the surface, secured to a rope brought from the ship and hauled on board.

As there was no new rigging on board large enough for shroud or stay, the riggers were compelled to use an old shroud, put aboard for making rope-yarns, — their best and only resource. From this opportune piece of old junk some fathoms were

cut, to lengthen out the severed ropes for splicing and enough to turn in an eye about the mast-heads.

Tom Crawford was given the swifter, and old Buntline tackled the backstay, with the certainty that the best possible use would be made of the materials given them to work with. A kettle of boiling tar was got ready, in which to soak the hard, glassy shrouds, to make them soft and pliable for splicing. By noon two neat, strong splices were made; the mended places tarred, parcelled and served, ready to go aloft after the mid-day meal. A four-stranded rope, with a clumsy heart to deal with, is most awkward to handle, and only the best seamen are equal to the task. The swifter had been so clawed and bitten by the devil-fish—in search of what he could find within—that much of the spun-yarn had to be stripped off and new parcel and service put on.

In the meantime the blacksmith's forge had been going full blast, welding the broken links of the martingale guy. The chain plate of the backstay was got off from the side, the broken iron welded and the bull's-eye newly strapped, ready in time for Buntline to set up his stay.

Braybrook took the main-yard in hand. This job had been well discussed at the breakfast table. Whether to send the yard down on deck, or cock-bill the spar plumb up and down the mainmast, for convenience of repairing, had been duly considered. The mate had made choice of the latter method.

The midship deck was so fully occupied by carpenters and calkers that Braybrook's plan seemed best.

The head carpenter was called off to work with the mate on the broken yard. A neat piece of scarfing was accomplished. The new work was secured with copper bolts and trebly hooped with strong iron bands, to one of which eyebolts were riveted for the main brace, lift and foot-rope. A coat of red lead was applied to the iron-work to prevent its rusting the sail, and the yard-end was painted, ready to swing the yard into position just as the sun went down.

The deck seams and the hatch-combings had been calked during the day, and the seams payed, ready for any emergency. The broken monkey-rail had been found on the shore, where it had drifted after the fight, and it had been partly secured in its place. The bobstay had been taughtened after the severe strain put upon it. The dolphin-striker had been set plumb beneath the bowsprit-bees and its chain guys secured in their places.

The two broken parts of the flying-jib-boom had been got in on deck, the two guys and the topgallant stay were temporarily secured at the boom-iron and the slack of the guys taken in at the bow; and with the exception of the unshipped rudder, the vessel could put to sea at a moment's notice. After the rough handling the ship had received from the devil-fish, it was not deemed prudent to tarry long in a place so full of scarecrows — real and imaginary.

After supper, during the early twilight, a funeral service was read by the captain over the remains of the poor old cook, and the unfortunate Congo was taken to the Bird's Nest and laid by the side of his dead shipmates. Good old Uncle Joe found some words of qualified praise to say at the grave of this timid man and inefficient cook, whose ghost, the sailors believed, would now hover around the devil's cavern and make it unpleasant for the hateful denizen within.

Hardly a thought had been given through the day to the still squirming tentacle in the blubber room, for the hatches had been kept on for the convenience of the workmen, but late in the afternoon Dr. Greville got permission to make a thorough inspection of the gigantic trunk. A punch with a handspike demonstrated that it was alive and full of fight as ever, so that great caution was required while making the inspection.

The whole length of this severed piece of tentacle, when it lay inert, was twenty-one feet. It was large as a topmast at the severed end, tapering to the size of a man's leg. It was round on the upper side and of a dark brown, flat on its under surface and of a milky white. There was a double row of denticulated suckers along its whole length. The largest of these sucking disks were as big as a breakfast plate and could take in a man's head, diminishing to the size of a tea-cup near the end. Each disk was surrounded by sharp, horny claws.

To increase the horror of this most formidable carnivorous weapon of attack and torture, it was armed on each side, throughout its length, with a row of strong, horny hooks, each large enough to lift a man. While these hooks were thickly placed on the sides of the claw-end for ten feet back, the spaces then increased until they were ten and twelve inches apart at the large end.

This trunk had great prehensile power to lengthen and contract. It could increase its length ten feet, so that on a stretch it measured thirty-one feet. Its rows of cruel claws had the instinct to draw far back—open-mouthed as it were—to receive its prey, and then clutch fast upon an object like a clenched hand, crushing a spade handle in its grasp. It was by this method that the claw had broken the leg bones of the cook in more than twenty places. So that nothing once secured could escape from its grasp.

The final conclusion was, that the eight side-tentacula of the devil-fish were about fifty feet long when at rest, while the two forward ones were sixty feet in length. All of these massive trunks were as big as the mainmast at their base, tapering very much like an elephant's trunk.

The head was taken from an eight-barrel cask, which was placed fairly under the hatch to receive the squirming tentacle. There was a general wish to preserve it for further inspection and as a curious memento of the desperate battle waged with the gigantic creature. A rope strap was cautiously got

around the middle of the trunk, to which the mast-head tackle was hooked, hoisting away on the con-torting thing until it could be dumped into the great cask, which was then headed up and filled with brine sufficient to keep the tentacle from spoiling. In spite of the brine, and being deprived of air, the hateful thing was alive and thrashing about in the cask two days after.

As night drew on the hatches were barred down and the tarpaulins put on. Cutting spades were disposed of in convenient places, in case of another battle, though it was not believed that the wounded beast would desire another encounter.

A cot was slung on the top of the cabin for Mr. Morey, its lanyards secured fore-and-aft by the main and mizzen masts, with a double purpose in view. In his weak and fretful condition the bruised man was haunted by the ever-present fear of another attack from his hated foe, and he wished to be on deck in case the ship should again be hove down, at the risk of sinking, as on the previous night; but the night passed without any cause for alarm.

The afternoon of the following day was drawing to a close before anything of importance occurred. The flying-jib-boom had been spliced and sent out, — though somewhat abbreviated in length, — and the stays and guys were set up taut, ready for use. The rudder had been shipped in its place and new wheel-ropes rove for the tiller, together with numerous other minor preparations for sailing on the coming day.

Suddenly a wild, joyous cry was heard from the crow's-nest ashore. Mr. Morey had pleased his fancy by climbing aloft with the aid of some of his men, and had spent the day under the long, drooping fronds of the palms.

"There she blows! blows! blo-o-ows!" was the enlivening cry that brought every soul on the ship to his feet.

"What do you see there?" hailed the captain from the top of the cabin.

"A school of sperm whales, close along the shore."

Captain Lawrence and the mate sprang into a boat, then lying at the gangway, and ordered the crew to pull in to the lookout. It was too near night to think of whaling, but the rallying cry had stirred them to the quick and they wished to see for themselves. The barometer was falling, the atmosphere was oppressive, and there were many other indications of a typhoon brewing.

When the officers climbed into the crow's-nest, far above the surrounding trees, there, indeed, was an immense school of cows and calves, reaching far as the eye could see to the south; it was a glorious sight for a whaleman's eyes to feast upon. The whales were scattered in pods of ten, twenty and fifty in a lot.

Close in to the island was a school of fifty large cows, accompanied by ten small calves. Most of the calves were strong enough to swim playfully by

the side of the mother whales. A few very small ones were clinging, baby-like, to the back of the dams, which were as tender of their nurslings as a human mother. A very young calf was seen to drop from the parent's back and frisk about like a young fawn; tiring of its childish romp, it scampered alongside the mother whale and clung to her back, with its little tail resting against the hump, preferring to be tugged in arms like a land baby, and find amusement in the frolic of others.

The officers were curious to see how the in-shore school would avoid the coral reef that jutted out half a mile from the shore. From their lofty aerie the reef could be traced round to the west of the island, but how and where it ended was not known to anyone. To the surprise of the whalemén on went the whole school of loitering whales down between the shore and reef and disappeared to leeward.

After watching the off-shore whales through their glasses till nearly dark, the officers descended from their high perch among the trees and were pulled alongside the ship. Braybrook left the captain and second mate at the gangway and ordered the crew to pull him over to the north shore of the harbor, where he had noticed but a thin growth of trees. He worked his way through the woods to the beach beyond, determined to ascertain where the reef ended.

Great was the mate's surprise, when he emerged from the trees, to find that the whole body of whales

were gathered into a confused snarl. The panic-stricken creatures had come to where the encircling reef trended abruptly in to the land, and left them no egress other than the opening by which they came.

The mate was electrified by what he saw, for it seemed to him an opportunity to catch a voyage at one haul. He ordered the crew to hasten back to the boat. Pulling hurriedly to the ship, Braybrook shouted to the captain when afar off, and related how the whole school had been entrapped by the reef, and expressed his belief that the boats might kill the whole of them.

Captain Lawrence acquiesced in the mate's plan, that all the boats should go outside and endeavor to secure the whales till morning. Braybrook pulled swiftly out of the harbor to explore the situation before dark, and then improve the possibilities as best he could. Three other boats followed, headed by the captain, Mr. Antoine heading Morey's boat. A short distance round to the west the mate found that a projecting spur of the reef reached within a quarter of a mile of the shore. A space so narrow offered great hopes of confining the whales till morning.

Mr. Bailey and Antoine were ordered to anchor their boats equidistant from shore to reef, and be prepared to show torches in mid-channel, while large fires of drift-wood were to be kept burning on the reef spur and along the adjacent shore. Fires

were soon lighted and boat-loads of drift-wood gathered at the required places.

When the fire on the reef-point was well ablaze, green boughs were heaped upon it, making a dense smoke, so heavy that it blew along the water in the direction that the whales must come. This alone was deemed sufficient to blockade the surface, as whales have great dislike for smoke; and it remained to be seen if the glare of light would prevent their trying the under-water passage.

Captain Lawrence pulled back to the ship to procure a variety of necessaries. Two empty tar barrels were sent out to be floated near the anchored boats and set on fire in case the whales should attempt to pass. Torches were made of strands of hemp rope, dipped in tar and oil, to be kept burning by the boats during the night. The harbor entrance was lighted by lanterns for the convenience of the boats when passing in or out, as the sky was overcast and it promised to be very dark.

When the plans were perfected for the boats, and due preparations made to receive the devil-fish, the ship-keepers were divided into two watches, and one-half of the men sent below. Mr. Morey preferred to sleep on deck, having an awning over his cot, and would no doubt keep the best of lookout for his old friend. The deck watch was ordered to prepare the fifth boat for lowering in case of need,—a new one lying bottom up on the skids overhead. Rowlocks were fitted, and a set of oars got out.

When the watch was changed at two o'clock a boat's crew was sent out to relieve Braybrook's boat-watch. The mate reported that the fires had been kept bright, without a sign of the whales having passed. The Fire Cross had burned brightly through the midnight hours, yet, strange to say, it was now considered a good omen, by some sudden transition of feeling, so frequent among sailors.

An hour before the sun began to tinge the eastern gloaming all was astir aboard ship. It had been determined to get the ship under-weight, take her outside and anchor in the reef-channel, where the ship-keepers could keep up a smoke, and fire the cannon to help drive back the whales while the boats were attacking them.

After the sails were set and the anchor hove short, tow-lines were secured to the trees on each side of the channel, by which to warp out the ship, as there never was wind enough to fill the sails in the harbor during the morning hours. The anchor was tripped and catted, and the Fleetwing hauled out by the tow-lines till beyond the shelter of the trees. First her jibs filled, then her forward sails, till the morning trades expanded all her canvas, and she ran gracefully down the shore to her anchorage, in the narrowest part of the reef-passage.

Sails were then furled in the double-reef, for the weather was still threatening. They were in a typhoon country, and could not be too cautious. The moon would change during the coming night ;

and a new moon coinciding with perigee could not fail to bring a gale. Their anchorage was a risky place to be caught in if a storm came up in the night, but their opportunity for a grand strike made it worth taking the risk.

The plan of attack decided on at breakfast was for Antoine to go ahead and fasten to a cow having a calf, as a guide to find the school when under water. The three other boats were to follow and attack as loose boats, using their lances to kill as many as possible; for after a whale has been made to spout blood, it is not capable of making much effort to escape.

After leaving the ship the four boats pulled a mile between the reef and shore before the whales were discovered. The school was still gathered into a confused mass, not having gotten over their fright or decided how to escape. Mr. Antoine was sent ahead to fasten. He approached the school cautiously, and made choice of a large cow with a small calf. The instant his irons entered the whale there was a wild tumult among the frightened creatures. Away they started, running pell-mell further on around the island, flinging out their brown heads as they ran, and snorting forth their white spouts with frenzy. Going at such speed, the water soon shoaled to less than two fathoms, and the whales were brought to a stand by the reef making in to the shore.

It was a strange sight to witness the timidity of

such a mass of monsters, when, if they knew their prowess, they would have swept the boats from their path easily as one could brush away a fly. The boats were greatly endangered going among such a toss and tumble of leviathans, for when the water became too shallow for them to swim their actions became unaccountable. Some whales flung their flukes into the air and pounded the water with a useless expenditure of strength. Others thrust their vast heads out of the water and endeavored to stand on end. Many lay on their backs with their pectoral fins thrust in the air, rigid with fright, exposing their lives to the deadly lances of the whalemen. Several large whales leaped out upon the submerged reef, floundering till they crushed the flimsy coral and embayed themselves in the yielding mass.

The four boats now rushed to the attack. With lance in hand the officers began their task of butchery, plunging their keen weapons into heart and lungs of the gallied cachalots, till the frenzied assailants became as extravagant in their actions as were the assailed in their futile endeavor to escape.

With Uncle Joe every act was done with coolness and deliberation. No hurry or flurry impelled him into useless danger, but where a fat whale presented her corrugated side to his lance the keen blade found its way to the most vital part of his victim.

Captain Lawrence encountered several of the whales with breasts exposed; these he killed on the

instant by a single lance-thrust in the heart. The captain's weapon was kept active for half an hour, and dead whales thickened in his pathway till his boat was in the very midst of the snarl. There a dying whale breached out in its flurry and capsized the boat, endangering the lives of all.

The captain and crew escaped without serious injury, and the boat was not stoven enough to prevent further use. The crew swam about, avoiding the dying whale as best they could. When she died the boat was pushed into shoal water, turned over and bailed out. Then the drifting oars and boat-gear were secured from among the wild tangle of whales, and soon the men were seated upon their thwarts ready to renew the attack.

Braybrook was perhaps the most battle-mad of them all. With his brawny chest bared, and his sleeves rolled to the elbows, the mate rushed into action as if contemplating death to the whole school. Woe to the whale, large or small, that came within reach of his lance. Wherever the broad side of a whale appeared, into that black skin went his lance, without waiting to determine his thrusts by the nicer guides of hump or eye or fin. This method does not always bring blood to the spout, but greatly adds to the danger of the surroundings by wounding, without killing, the whales.

Some of these wounded whales frequently leaped into the air, made frantic by their agony, and fell crashing back upon whatever lay beneath them.

One breaching monster nearly crushed the mate's boat, breaking two of his oars and filling the boat with water, making nice work for the crew to keep from being capsized. She was finally bailed out and came into action again, though pretty short manned for oars.

It was a glad sight for the hardy whalemens to see upward of twenty red spouts emblazoned on the air, tokens of their prowess, and picturesque symbols of victory never witnessed to such extent before. Some of the dying whales threw out bright red spouts, ejected broad and strong into the air. Such spouts flowed as from a never-ending fountain, floating down the breeze like crimson banners, and glistening in the sun like the gaudy fanions of a gala.

Scattered here and there among these gaily colored spouts were others of a sombre hue, spouts black as the pirate flag of Lafitte. These dark-hued spouts came slowly and infrequently, from waning strength, and were so heavy with clotted gore that they spattered back upon the shoulders of the dying victim; growing weaker and weaker, lower and lower; becoming so thick and tarry that they just bubbled over the spout-hole, sobbing and sighing; ending with the choking, gurgling noise of a drowning man in his last struggle.

After being driven to the wildest state of desperation, some of the least frightened whales at length got headed back around the island. Once given the cue to escape, and every unwounded

whale followed the leader, dashing on toward the ship with an impetuosity that nothing could resist.

Seeing this new move Mr. Bailey fastened to the nearest whale he could catch, a lively young cow, which ran in the very thickest of the school. Before the whales reached the ship, in their headlong dash, Uncle Joe set four other cows to spouting blood, all of which soon straggled behind, and two ran upon the shore in a condition of blind staggers.

Neither the smoke of the fires — which nearly smothered the crews in the fast boats — or the thundering of the cannon had the least effect in stopping the frenzied whales. All having life enough to get out went plunging on for the open sea, dipping down under the ship and her chain as they passed. One clumsy cow caught the cable upon her hump and carried the anchor twenty rods to windward, tugging the ship along in tow, as if she had cast in her lot with the whales instead of the whalers.

When the last of the unwounded whales had passed the ship Mr. Bailey cut his line from the fast whale — which he had not lanced — and turned his attention to heading back several half-dead whales that came straggling on behind. Meeting two of those that he had made to spout blood, the sagacious old whaleman turned them back by pricking them about an eye with continuous lance-thrusts, — the most sensitive place about the cachalot. Mr. Antoine's whale proved impervious to his pricking, and ran head-on into the ship's side, which half

stunned the dying creature, though it headed him round whence he came.

The captain and mate remained on the battle-field, re-lancing some of the whales which died hard, and killing those half buried in the coral reef. The day had advanced to mid-forenoon before the last of the whales were dead; thirty-one cows had been killed, counting the three about the ship, beside two small calves foolishly killed by Antoine in his fresh zeal to become a whaler.

The weather began to look hard and squally. The water had become a steel-gray color and the sky wore an ominous, threatening aspect. It was fast becoming a question how to secure what they had killed before the storm snatched away their rich, oily prizes. It was thought best to tow the whales to the shore and tie them to the trees; the ship could then be brought around and as many cut in as she would stow, and if time permitted, the blubber could be stripped from the others and left afloat till it was needed; while the several heads, which would keep for some time in the water, might be anchored anywhere.

When about twenty of the drifting whales had been secured, Captain Lawrence pulled in to the angle of the reef where it joined the land to tow out a small cow which had died there. Seeing a break in the shore he examined and found an underground passage, which evidently ran through into the harbor, as there was a current in that direction.

Landing to determine the extent of this submarine channel, and hoping to find a place where whales could be towed through into the bay, greatly to his surprise the captain found that the break had been made by the wreck of an old Spanish galleon,—a vessel, judging by her ancient build, that must have lain there three hundred years.

The mate was hastily called, and together the two astonished men made their observations. There was abundant evidence that when the galleon was wrecked the island was a deeply submerged reef, for every visible part of the vessel was thickly encased in coral, and the coral polypi never build above the surface. The edge of the broken coral-crust that now arched over the wreck was three feet thick, with six feet of rich soil over all, in which grew large trees and a dense tropical undergrowth.

But the problem, how came the old hulk thus forced up out of water? was not so easy to solve. Nothing but her rock-built cavern could have saved her from the yearly typhoons where she now was. The theory that the ingenious seamen agreed upon was this: The galleon first struck upon the reef proper, ran over that with a stoven bottom and sunk well below the surface, upon what is now the island; for it would require fifty years to grow such a crust of coral above her.

The three-storied poop-deck cabins were partly destroyed by the wash of storm waves over the reef,

and nothing but the naked transom timbers remained above her flush deck as far forward as the mizzen mast; and a strong coral arch still remained unbroken aft to the mizzen mast.

The weather had become so threatening that the officers gave up further examination of the wreck for the present. The whale that Captain Lawrence went to tow out was tied up where she lay. Two others that had died on the reef were secured to projecting rocks. There remained six large cows afloat out in deep water which the ship would pick up when she was brought round.

The boats now pulled for the ship, hungry and tired, where a good dinner awaited them. Before eating, the ship was got under-weigh and headed around toward the dead whales. She ran round the island under the main topsail and jib, the reefs having been let out of the topsail. While making the passage the boats' crews were sent off to their dinner, hungry enough to make havoc with the hard tack, salt junk and the jolly plum duff, which the steward, in the absence of the cook, had kindly contributed for the occasion.

Though the barometer was down to 28 and falling steadily, Captain Lawrence resolutely determined to push on and cut in all the whales he could before the storm burst upon them. Then, if the wind favored, the ship could be run round into harbor and made safe. An hour's sailing carried the ship among the drifting whales, and the boats pulled

out and secured the whole six to the ship. Then the anchor was let go and the cutting began with the utmost diligence.

The windlass rolled around merrily and the men were boisterous with song and chorus. Such lucky events on a voyage are often extemporized for hoisting and heaving, and their tuneful measures lift a deal of care and fret from the tired mariner. It was ten o'clock at night before the six oily jackets were rolled off of the carcasses and snugly stowed in the blubber room; and the six heads were lashed for the night to a kedge-anchor dropped out on the quarter.

The hands were turned in for a few hours' sleep, while the captain and steward took the watch. The steward was kept up to prepare an early breakfast, for the first flush of dawn must find them hooked on to other whales if the storm did not prevent.

CHAPTER XXII.

CAUGHT IN A TYPHOON.

THE night still remained calm, and the sky so overcast that not a star was visible. The barometer had fallen to 27, indicating that the storm was approaching fast. The atmosphere had become stifling and oppressive, depressing the heart-beat and making respiration laborious. A person not experienced in typhoons might be deceived by such a calm, sultry night, and look for nothing worse than a thunder-storm, yet the prevalent signs were ominous and infallible.

It was twelve o'clock, midnight, before the first cat's-paw was felt whisking across the face. Its touch was soft and silky, but hot as a tongue of flame. There was another quality in the paw of the cat, a touch the most infallible of all : The precursory puff of a typhoon is a mild sort of whirlwind, striking first upon the one cheek and then the other, the observer being enclosed in a rotating wind-whirl. An ordinary wind-puff, during a calm, strikes only one side of the face and passes away. While the

storm is distant, the diameter of a cyclonic wind-eddy is about thirty feet, growing steadily less as the gale approaches, until there is hardly a perceptible interval in its touch on the two sides of the face.

Uncle Joe now made his appearance on deck, causing the captain's heart to sink within him like a leaden plummet. He very well knew that a terrific storm was brewing, and he was making his precautionary plans with the utmost coolness; but something more terrible than he conceived was at hand, to rouse out Joe Bailey after such a tiresome tussle with whales. Other men lay about the forward deck dead as logs — so drunk with sleep.

Upon second thought the presence of the white-wooled old veteran gladdened the heart of the captain, for Uncle Joe was the most weather-wise of men. So prescient was his wisdom in all things pertaining to wind, weather and whales, that, while the crew confessed his marvellous powers, he seemed little short of supernatural to those who knew him best.

“Well, well, Uncle Joe, aren't you tired enough to sleep after such a day's whaling?”

“It yam rudder sultry fur snoozin', sah. Den, Cap'n, dese yere wopple-jawed ole bones ke'p kickin' up ar bob'ry 'bout dis yere typhoon. So dis chile am brung up de fedder-fly an' goney-down fur ter test de ole critter. 'Cause yer see, Cap'n, we uns ain't in de best hol'in' ground ter stan' ar gale.

Dis yere coral bottom doan hol' de anchor ar bit gude."

"Yes, that's been a source of real anxiety to me, especially as these East India gales work around the wrong way for us to run for the harbor. When this gale comes it will strike us from the south, shift to the south-west and then to the west, where it will rake us along shore and test our ground-tackle as never before."

"Ah, weel, Cap'n, I's bin spoke ter der de gude Lawd 'bout dat matter, but de deah Fader doan seem ter heah dis chile ter-nite. De fac' am, sah, dat Gawd A'mighty rudder do all tings hissef, in him own way, dan hab dis po' niggarr show 'm how."

"We shall certainly need God's protecting care to-night if ever we did. We're going to catch it terribly from somewhere."

"Dat's so, Cap'n. Jus lemme sot de fly on de davy-head, an' diskiber how fur off de critter yam. How ofen duz de pussy-paws cum 'long, sah?"

"Until recently, the puffs have come once in about ten minutes. Now the interval is not more than five minutes, showing that the gale approaches fast."

While the officers were talking, Bailey fixed his feather-fly to the top of the davy-head, while the captain stood ready to throw up a small bunch of goney-down when the puff came, as an additional test.

One of the occasional proceedings of Joe Bailey

that greatly terrified the sailors was to sly out of his cabin, during watch below, bringing a well-baited hook and line. This he floated out over the stern, and soon drew about it a flock of albatross — though the crew declared there were none in sight when he began to fish for them. The old wizard would not permit any but the largest white one among them to take the bait. When the right one came, Bailey manœuvred the bait and let the big fellow take it. Hauling the bird in on deck with great care, he handled it tenderly and talked to it as if it were a negro baby ; adroitly robbing it of a few handfuls of soft down, he would set it adrift with some prayerful invocation for its welfare.

All this seemed simple enough to a rational person, but the spook-loving sailors were set all agog by the event. The superstitious fellows declared that old Joe had been communicating with the head devil, and they looked for a gale, a wreck or some horrible death among their number.

The venerable officer had two ways of showing the circular whirl of precursory wind-puffs before a typhoon. Throw a handful of bird-down into the air during a passing cat's-paw, and, if it is the out-rider of a typhoon, the feathers will describe the periphery of a ninety-foot circle ; but if only a common gale is pending the feathers will blow straight away. His other capital test was shown by a " fly," made light as gossamer with feathers and cork. During common puffs this feather-fly blows straight

out an instant and then falls limp along its staff, but if the cat's-paw preludes a cyclone, the dainty little fanion whirls about in circles during every puff.

A typhoon is not only a great central vortex of wind in itself, moving bodily along the elliptic of the great circle of the earth, — if not forced from its path by high land, — but it is also made up of millions of small vortexes that tear up the wave-tops with incredible fury. It is these secondary whirlwinds which do the most damage to ships at sea and to trees ashore. They have been known to twist off a topmast in a second, without stranding a rope of the rigging, wringing off the tough spar by spiral contortion, without evidence of the mast having been bowed forward by the squall.

The captain and Uncle Joe sat in the quarter-boat watching for the storm in anxious silence. They were remotely opposite types of brave, cool seamen; men ever found calmest in the hour of greatest danger. One was simple in his tastes, gentle and affectionate, childlike in his piety and full of reverence for divine things; a soul so full of pure aspirations that his spirituality glowed through his weather-worn face like a sun-burst from a storm-cloud; so provokingly fearless that sailors were wont to say of him, "Joe Bailey don't know when he ought to be afraid."

The other was a good example of an American shipmaster, a class of men full of delicious surprises. We may know such men for weeks and months in times of inaction, and deem them incapable of arous-

ing from their quiet, bookish ways, but there come many times during a perilous voyage when danger leaps to the fore-front, and destruction hangs by a hair; times calling for instant action, fertile expedients and an imperious will that all are willing to obey from a never-failing instinct of preservation. Such a man was Captain Lawrence, loving peril as if it were a heritage.

The two officers watched the gathering storm and revolved every expedient known to seamanship, for the lives on board would soon be imperiled. There was safety in deserting the ship with boats and provisions, and pulling to the shore before the storm burst. It was a cowardly alternative subsequently proposed by another. Captain Lawrence was one who would rather perish trying to save his noble ship than adopt such a scheme.

“Time for a puff, Uncle Joe. Stand by with your feather fixings.” A rustle was heard among the leaves along the shore.

“Yis, sah, shu nuf; dar she cums, humin’ like ar bumblebee. Look ar dat, Cap’n. See dem yere fedders whirl. My stars! de ole mischief am cumin’. It yam gwine ter blow de biggest kine o’ guns fo’ de nite am ober.”

“You are right. There’s no escaping it now. I think it will burst upon us within an hour, for the moon’s perigee culminates about this time. You had better turn in and get a nap before it strikes,” urged the captain affectionately.

“No, t’ank yer, sah.’ I’s jus gwine ter ke’p watch’ long wid my cap’n. Sleep ain’t nuffin in sich ar prospek ez dis yere. I lub ter watch de cumin’ ob dese yere drestle critters. De han’ ob be Lawd am in um. De gude book sez dat dese yere big-bug storms am de vehiele fo’ Gawd ter ride ter glory. Jes same ez gittin’ fast ter ar big bull whale, whin de wind pipes an’ de sea tumbles.” And the dear old soul grew eloquent on the biblical view of the subject.

“I suppose you have experienced many typhoons in your old-time whaling days?”

“Dat’s so, Cap’n. Sperienced sum ole snorters on de Japan groun’, befo’ de folks gut run ob de hatchin’ season. Tough fellers, dem yere typhoons, whin dey put on dar best clo’s. Dis chile duzn’t lub de critters werry weel. Ef de Fleetwing wuz on’y in de Isle o’ Palms, we uns wud laff on toder side ob de face.”

“Yes, we couldn’t be placed in a worse position than we are.”

“Weel, Cap’n, de bressed Lawd am de on’y sheet anchor now, out in dis yere open roadsted. Whin dat ole typhoon git ter tootin’ ’is horn, blow’n’ rite on shore, den we’s gut ter trus’ in Gawd A’mighty, an’ reef de taups’ils snug.”

“Right, Uncle Joe. Trust in the heavenly Father, and work like tigers when the time comes. It is a narrow space for even a clipper to beat in. There’s less than a mile between the reef and shore, and the

tacks will come often. With a black night above, and the water one sheet of foam, we can't distinguish either shore or reef; for the land will be a trifle blacker than the night, and the breakers only a little whiter than the seas."

"Dat's so, sah. But I specs dar's ar heap o' luck in dis deah ole wessel yit. She's tuck us frou sum tough times, an' we'll trus' 'er long's she floats."

The storm threatenings were increasing rapidly. Heavy undulations were heaving in upon the reef from many points of the compass, breaking with a low, muffled roar. The wind-puffs were giving voice to surly, wailing noises, dismal and foreboding to the ear. The rotary cat's-paw now came in rapid succession, first from one side of the island and then the other. The trees along the shore began to wail like resurrected ghosts.

Before one o'clock a smart gale was blowing from the land, which left the ship sheltered for the present. When it hauled to the west, as it certainly would in its natural rotation, there would be no further protection but the submerged reef, which would break the force of the waves, without abating the wind in the least.

The crew had enjoyed three hours' rest. The captain now ordered Mr. Bailey and steward to call out all hands, as there remained much work to be done before the ship would be ready for the worst. The topsails must be close-reefed, a reef taken in

the foresail, and the storm-mizzen bent, as there was no reef to take in the spanker.

The hatches were to be barred down, tarpaulins put on, and life-lines stretched fore-and-aft on each side of the deck. The skysail and royal yards must be sent down, and the royal masts struck, to lighten the load aloft. The deck was lumbered with oil casks, which must be got overboard out of the way.

When the mate came up the crew were divided into three working gangs, one for each mast. All were put upon reefing, furling and striking the light yards and masts. Quick time was made with that work. Then the cooper's gang was put to becketing the casks and rafting them overboard by strong ropes, which were secured to the chain cable outside of the hawse pipe. This raft would serve as an extra buoy by which to pick up the chain if the ship slipped or parted her cable.

This work thoroughly accomplished the bow boat was taken in and lashed over the tryworks. The other three boats were hoisted upon the upper cranes, and parbuckles were placed around them all, by which to roll them bottom up against the rigging if need be.

An extra hand-lead and line were prepared for use, for if the ship got under-weigh midst such darkness it would be necessary to feel the way along the bottom to avoid both the reef and the shore.

By two o'clock the wind had increased to a hurricane. It came soughing through the trees with a

ghostly, dismal sound, swaying the tall palms like reeds in the wind. The surf tumbled in upon the reef with a resounding roar, that echoed back from the forest in mournful strain.

The force of the wind increased momentarily, till it was evident to all that one of the fiercest cyclones of the Indian seas had broken bounds and was upon them. Sheltered as they were by the forest, the wind blew so hard that the long branches of the palm-trees were driven through the air like avenging arrows. The cocoa-nuts came crashing down upon the deck with the force of cannon-shot. Some of the flying branches were driven deep into the deck sheathing, while the nuts battered the masts, and stove in some of the front panels of the cabin.

Thus far the Fleetwing held firm to her anchor, without breaking ground. The coral bottom was expected to resist the pressure of the gale only while the ship was sheltered, and the best bower was now got ready to drop the instant the larboard anchor should drag. Ninety fathoms of chain were ranged and securely bitted, ready for the coming emergency. This was accomplished with but one accident; English Bill was knocked senseless by a cocoa-nut in the back. He was taken below and rallied, but was off duty for a week.

It was three o'clock before the gale hauled round to the westward enough to deprive the ship of shelter from the land. It had been veering point by point for the past half hour, and was increasing

in fury at the approach of the storm-centre. The wind was now blowing directly along the shore. The ship swung fairly to her anchor, and, to the surprise of all, held firmly to the bottom. Changing the ship's position so gradually caused the bill of the anchor to burrow deeper and deeper, and it was still holding beautifully.

Two men were now ordered into each top, ready to loose the three topsails with utmost dispatch when the cable parted. All hands were kept stationed at the topsail sheets, staysail halyards and the fore and main spencers, alert for the emergency that must come soon.

The force of the gale now became fearful. It was almost impossible to crawl over the orlop deck to watch the anchor. Though the reef shielded the ship from the full force of the seas, still the waves continued to increase steadily, until the ship strained hard at her anchor, and must soon drag it or part the chain. The whole ninety fathoms of cable had been paid out, and yet the bow rose and fell uneasily in the invading seas.

As if to add another horror to the black night and the shrieking typhoon a thunder-storm now burst upon the devoted ship, greatly imperiling the situation. The flash of electric fury let loose upon them lit up the shore and reef with a ghostly glare on either hand. The forest was a line of dismal blackness; the dark forms of the bending trees were like an army of giants fleeing before the storm.

The breakers on the reef shone ghastly white in the lightning's flash where the monstrous surf crumbled into snowdrift with a deafening roar.

Grand and terrible as was the storm the falling thunder-bolts and lightning flashes were added elements of sublimity to brave hearts with souls calm enough to enjoy the scene in such an hour of peril. Such was Uncle Joe. The grand old man exulted in the grandeur and beauty of the scene. Standing among the men, under the shelter of the hurricane house, his white head reverently bared, as if in the veritable presence of his Maker, Uncle Joe wore a rapt and smiling face as he interpreted the scene to the men :

“Ah, chilun, doan yer mind dis yere rumpus. De same gude Lawd what wuz wid us in de calm yam roun’ ’bout us now. Dis yam Gawd’s woice speakin’ in de t’under. Doan yer seed de Fader’s face shine in de lightnin’? Dis werry storm yam de Lawd’s chariot. Gawd A’mighty rides straddle on de wings ob de wind, while huntin’ up all de po’ sinners ob de yearth. So tack ar-bout, brudders! Save yer soles fo’ glory, fo’ de bressed Lawd yam on de track ob us all.”

Observing by the dim light of the lantern that the men were gathered on the western side of the deck, Bailey instructed them to “Tote ober ter de port side, chilun. Fo’ de lightnin’ allus hits de fust lick on de sunset side ob ebbry t’ing.” In further discussion with Dr. Greville, the old man declared

that twenty times vessels in which he sailed had been struck, and always on the western side. It was such keen observations as these that led the man of science to lend a willing ear to the black wizard of the sea.

The typhoon gradually hauled round to the north-west, leaving the ship more thoroughly exposed, as she was now trailing fairly upon the land. The momentum of blended wind and water was appalling. A dozen cables would not long suffice to hold the vessel now, and when it parted the ship must trust to her legs alone. She tugged bravely at her anchor and breasted the seas nobly, but she sheered and reared and bounded in the worst squalls like a spurred steed facing the discharge of a battery.

God grant that her iron leash may hold ! was the prayer of all ; for pitiless were the rocks alee, and the mad waves broke along the shore, ready to engulf whatever came in their grasp.

The seamen had long ago been sent into the tops to cut loose the topsails when the cable snapped. There the brave fellows clung in the wet shrouds, with sheath knife in hand, ready to cut the yard-arm gaskets when the long-expected event should happen. The helm had been thrust over to starboard and lashed, preparing the ship for a stern-board towards the land when she broke adrift. This would cast the vessel's head toward the reef while sail was being made.

The gang of men stationed at the sheets and brails of the two spencers and storm-mizzen had been in momentary expectation of fulfilling their orders: "When the chain parts, let fly and haul aft, every man!" For they well knew that what was done must be done quickly, or the sails would be torn to tatters.

The captain kept his station by the helm, with a light hand at the lashed wheel. Bailey was looking after the sails at the main, with the best gang of men in the ship. Antoine looked after the mizzen. The mate was forward, giving the closest attention to the taut, hard-strained cable, and ready to set the staysail, spencer and fore topsail if the feat could be accomplished.

It was nearly half-past three when another thunder-storm burst upon the Fleetwing, adding a new deluge to that which already seemed more water than wind. With the driving rain came a further increase of the hurricane. The wind came in heavy concussions, as if huge rocks were being hurled against masts and sides of the doomed ship. This proved too much for the over-strained cable. The chain parted at the hawse pipe with the clang of a funeral bell, heard above the hoarse din of the storm like the dread summons of death.

God help them now! Danger is upon every hand. Destruction is everywhere. The wind-driven ship is drifting before the blast, driving broadside-on toward the wave-lashed shore. Earth, ocean and

air seem hurled into one horizontal blast. The salt spray blended with the avalanche of water from the clouds, till the ship seemed drowned in a water-spout.

Braybrook was at his station on the bow, and when the shock of the sundering chain rang through the ship the hoarse voice of the mate pierced every ear with needles of sound :

“ Make sail ! ” came like a volley of bullets along the rushing gale. True, the imperative sentence was shattered into a thousand fragments, but the spirit of the vital order was there, riding like a ghost on the black wings of the wind.

The darkness of the night at that moment was of more than hadæan blackness. So dark, that the land could not have been seen had the stern of the ship been clutched fast by the shore. Here was a time to try the souls of men. Puny man and the mad elements, when thus pitted in battle, are most unequal contestants. One single error in the pending combat, and all were lost ! The previous precautions so judiciously taken were the work of seamen who outwit a gale before it comes.

If the storm sails can now be set without rending into ribbons the Fleetwing is perhaps equal to beating against the hurricane. When the cable parted, the half-stunned seamen, aloft and aloft, anticipated the mate's order and worked like heroes. The stay-sail, spencers and mizzen were all fairly set while the ship was making her stern-board, and held their

weather leeches to the wind. So, also, were the three topsails loosed before the ship fell off, and ready to sheet home when the bow swung off sufficiently to shiver them in the gale.

All this had been so well timed that the topsails were set and braced up, drawing full to the beam gale, when the stern-post began to grate and then bump hard on the coral beach.

“Fader in Heben! yam de gude ship los’, arter we uns truss ’er ter dee?” was Uncle Joe’s heart-rending cry, heard only by the God above through the wild din of the gale.

Now came a time to test the quality of the Fleetwing; the hardest test of any name or nature ever put upon a sailing craft, to gather headway with her stern held fast in the grip of the sand.

The storm-sails were all drawing, strained to their utmost, in one of the fiercest gales that ever blew. The ship careened beyond her bearings as never before. Crouching with the cunning of a tiger before he springs, she trembled and staggered and wrung her oaken keel under the strong press of sail, then slowly gathered way and dragged her imprisoned stern from the sand. She had cleared the shore and was free.

“She’s afloat! she’s afloat!” were the delirious shouts that rang through the ship, though every voice was throttled by the gale. No man present can ever forget that hour to his dying day. The outcry of every soul, whether saint or sinner, turned

God-ward with such heart-felt praise as finds favor in the divine record above.

The Fleetwing now sprung to her task like a mettlesome charger which feels the goading spur in his side. The royal creature came up to the wind and shook her plumage in the gale like a kingly albatross rising peerless above the storm. The gigantic seas came at her, burying her bows in tons of foam, as with intent to contest her right of way.

The ship dashed on through the darkness in the direction of the reef, which lay smothered in foam somewhere in her path. It now became a question of moment to learn if the new danger could be discovered before striking upon it. The space between reef and land was a mile wide. The ship was sailing fully five knots an hour and required but twelve minutes, at present speed, to decide her fate.

Two hand-leads were kept going freely, one cast from the lee fore-chains, the other from the starboard boat. The leads were thrown alternately, lest some error should prove fatal to the ship. Soundings taken on the previous day proved that the reef was bold to approach, so that the leads were not likely to give warning of its dangerous proximity.

Ten minutes passed and every heart became tumultuous with apprehension. Seeing was now a useless faculty and availed nothing; neither could the sense of hearing proffer friendly aid, for the surf on the reef could make no louder uproar than the mad wind and the mountain waves.

The gigantic billows came roaring along the surface with frightful velocity, crashing against the oak planking like shocks of cavalry hurled against a buttlement of steel. The white tops of the black billows seemed torn as with the talons of vultures, rent into shreds of flying foam and sent streaming through the seething air, like fringes of white hair rended from a thousand maddened coursers.

All hands were kept at their stations, ready to tack about on the instant. The flash of a pistol had been agreed upon as the mate's signal from the bow when the reef was discovered.

Twelve minutes went by, leaving every soul in an agony of suspense. For one instant the wind seemed less furious and the waves less turbulent, as if the ship had become embayed. Suddenly a vast white wall of phosphorescent breakers confronted the look-outs, towering like an Alpine avalanche high above the bows. The mate's pistol flashed the signal :

“Tack ship !” — which set thirty frantic seamen at work like madmen.

The helm was thrust alee and the forward sheets let fly. The spanker boom was quickly bowed amidships, and the ship righted and rushed into the teeth of the wind, turned in her own length and headed back toward the land, without rending a yard of her canvas. The whiteness of the breakers had proved the salvation of the ship.

Never before had the deep after-keel of the Fleetwing shown to such advantage. A ship's length

nearer to the dread danger, and the vessel would have crashed upon the reef and become entangled in the grip of the breakers beyond recovery. Even as it was, after the ship had tacked, the swirling footswash of the surf was wrangling with her rudder like a snarl of infuriated serpents bent upon her destruction.

It now became a question whether the black land could be distinguished through the blacker gloom of the night. All went well until the first six minutes had passed, and the ship had sailed half way across the channel. Then another thunder-squall burst upon the vessel. The fierce lightning illuminated the infernity of the scene and disclosed the wild chaos near about them. The wet masts and shrouds gleamed in the vivid flashes like molten gold. The vast black waves rolling down upon the ship seemed ridden by spectral riders, panoplied in white whirlwinds of foam, who lashed their gigantic steeds with the wrath of the storm.

During the squall the wind hauled four points more to the northward, bringing a new element of danger. Instead of sailing directly across the mile-wide channel the ship was now headed partly along the land, upon such an angle that it was difficult to determine the distance sailed.

The fate of all now depended upon the careful cast of a leaden plummet. A lantern was held for each of the leadsmen to read his marks, and every cast was watched most anxiously. As the calls of the

leadsmen could not be heard, they made signs by holding up four fingers — denoting four fathoms — after each cast. The ship was on the southern tack sixteen minutes before the sounding changed. At the next cast the forward leadsmen held up but three fingers, calling out :

“Quarter less four!”

The mate's pistol flash mimicked the lightning for an instant. The ship sprang into the wind, breasting the gale gallantly, shaking her wet canvas with a noise rivalling the thunder as she swung round on the port tack without grounding. But when fairly round, headed for the reef, both leadsmen called :

“Three and a quarter fathoms!” — leaving just six spare inches of water under the keel, and no land to be seen.

Having now found that the Fleetwing was equal to the task of beating out, the ship was kept close into the wind to while away time till daylight. Shortly after four o'clock the wind again shifted in a squall of rain, about N. by E. It was thought best to tack, though they had not seen the breakers, as the ship could now be headed close along under the lee of the reef.

The dawn was long coming, and at five o'clock another danger confronted them. The ship had worked so far to the west on her present tack that the curve of the reef must now trend down across her bow to the S. E. To meet this difficulty the fore-topsail was ordered aback, to make a dead

drift. But a squall struck the ship at that moment, and the topsail blew out of the bolt-ropes with the report of a cannon.

This misfortune compelled a reduction of sail aft, and the mizzen-topsail was taken in and furled. The ship was kept crowded into the wind, and an anchor got ready to drop—as a last resort—to club-haul the ship round on the other tack, in case she lee-bowed the reef, and there was not room to wear round.

There now came such a down-pouring of rain as none but the family of Noah ever recorded. The heavens seemed to open a sluice-way with intent to deluge the ship. It had the effect to kill the wind, and left the ship tossing and rolling in a calm. The deck was a foot deep in water and the open wash-boards in the bulwarks were not sufficient outlet. It was at first believed to be a water-spout, but it lacked the rotative motion of such a vortex.

It was a strange phenomenon. As the barometer had not risen there was no evidence that the typhoon had passed. It was finally decided that the ship was enclosed in the vortex of the storm-centre; this conclusion was borne out by puffs of wind striking the ship from every point of the compass, and it would soon be confirmed by the ship being caught up by the southern edge of the storm.

As daylight was breaking more sail was required to work into the harbor, if the wind should remain light. The inner jib and fore-staysail were loosed

and set, and the reefed foresail loosed and left hanging in the buntlines.

At length a strong puff came from the N. E., and it came to stay. In ten minutes the gale was renewed in all its fury; before the gale piped on the yards were braced about, the sheets got over to starboard, the foresail set and the ship headed in toward the land.

The rain ceased soon as the wind assumed control. When it cleared, the reef was found close under the lee, the surf combing over it from every direction. Standing over toward the island, the shore was soon visible, and the ship kept away, running along the beach with a free wind.

When approaching the inlet to the harbor the gale suddenly chopped round to the S. E., taking the ship aback, and bursting the jib in an instant. The ship got safely round on the starboard tack, without further loss of sails, and the wind blew fair for her to enter the channel. Keeping away with eased yards, she ran through into the bay and dropped her best bower near the old anchorage. With glad hearts and many a silent prayer the Fleetwing's people clewed up and furled the wet canvas, that had so providentially saved them from destruction.

The dear little harbor was in a sad plight. Every foot of the bay was found covered with palm leaves and foliage of every hue, torn from the tropical trees. Deck-loads of various kinds of fruits had

been cast into the haven by the ruthless wind. The tallest trees were still tasked to their utmost to withstand the storm. Bending and swaying, sighing and sighing, their best element of strength was gained from the mutual support derived from clinging to each other. Such a scene would have been appalling had not the crew already battled with the mad elements at their worst. Thus the magnitude of danger is best shown by contrast. The infernal uproar which still dinned in their ears served to awaken a pleasant reminiscence of their escape from the storm without.

When the ship was made snug, and breakfast over, all hands were ordered to turn in for a long rest, for their labors of body and mind had been exhaustive in the hard tussle with the typhoon. Hoogley took the forenoon watch, and all others crawled out of their wet clothes into the berths, laughing at the harmless uproar of the hurricane without, and indifferent to the murky gloom of the sky, which lowered over the bay black as the forecast of doom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SPANISH WRECK.

THE typhoon somewhat abated at sunset, and by midnight not a storm-cloud could be seen. The stars came out and dotted the canopy above, imparting joy to the night-watch, like a revelation from heaven. The twinkling orbs peered down into the tranquil bay with benignant faces, as if they knew nothing of the pandemonium that had just transpired.

But for the torn foliage, the broken trees, and the rent sails, the Fleetwing's people might well have doubted the scene of devastation that they had witnessed. It would be weeks before the palms would be presentable, and the foliage of other trees could replace their loss. Every flower was stripped from shrub and vine, and not a fully-ripened fruit was left upon the trees.

An hour before dawn all hands were roused out to begin the duties of the day. Breakfast was eaten by lamplight, and the tryworks were started on the blubber of the six whales while it was yet dark.

It was understood that the boiling must be driven to the utmost, as the mellow blubber in the hold was already losing oil from being so moiled about by the gale.

Taking three boats and twenty men, before the break of day Braybrook pulled round the island to work upon the other whales. Spades, tackles, grappnels, and all other things needful to strip the blubber from the whales were taken. First of all every whale had to be scarfed in several places across the back to relieve the strain on the blubber, the bodies had become so swollen from being tossed upon the shore.

Three gangs were then set to work rolling off the blubber by means of tackles made fast to the trees. The heads were left on for the ship to cut off, long after, when ready to hoist them on board. As the oily jackets were stripped off they were left afloat in the water, anchored, or tied to the trees, to await the ship's coming.

When night approached the mate's gang drew their boats upon the beach and worked their way through the trees to the bay shore, where a boat from the ship came to take them on board. So the days passed in hard, unremitting toil. The boiling was continued night and day, and to do the best, much oil would be lost from delay in boiling.

When the ship was ready for more blubber the anchor was taken and catted, and the ship was sailed round to the north shore. Anchoring near to

the rafted blubber, the blanket-pieces were only hove aboard as required, as the hot deck set the oil to streaming and buckets were kept under the scuppers to receive it.

The anchor and chain from which the ship had parted were left where they lay till less busy times. The rafted casks attached to the cable were hoisted on board, as required to fill with oil. There was now no fear of gales, for but one typhoon is looked for at each change of monsoons, which occurs during March and November, or at some approximate time.

It would require three weeks' hard labor to boil out and stow down the eleven hundred barrels of oil taken from the thirty-one whales. This, together with Mocha Dick's oil, would secure to the Fleetwing the third of a voyage when four months out,—most unusual luck and well worth the hard toil now required of her crew.

After the blubber was boiled out and the last of the heads hoisted aboard, the ship was warped out over the lost cable, the chain hove in and the anchor taken to the cathead where it belonged. At length the dozen or more carcasses that still remained embayed in the angle of the reef were made most unsavory by the heat of the torrid sun, and it was determined to run back into the harbor with the next coming breeze.

During the night one of the boiling-watch discovered what seemed to be a wreck hove up on the reef, half a mile out from the land. The object

loomed in the darkness, showing the indistinct outline of a vessel's hull. It gradually changed its position, as though the surf hove it further in upon the reef. Sometimes it was buried in the breakers and again would emerge into stronger outline than before. At length the object worked completely over the reef and disappeared under water.

At early daybreak their old enemy, the devil-fish, was seen feeding upon a carcass near where the supposed wreck had disappeared, which accounted for what the night-watch had seen. The maimed beast evidently crept slowly because of his recent wounds. When the sun came up the great beast had not concluded his breakfast, but seemed annoyed by the strong light; suddenly he dropped under water and dragged the half-eaten carcass down with him.

In about two hours the carcass came bobbing up to the surface again, greatly depleted of its decayed flesh. This occurrence caused great uneasiness on board, lest the monster, now festering under his wounds, should be tempted to again attack the ship; for with open hatches, tiers of unlashed oil casks and ten whale's heads on deck, the ship was in no condition for battle.

The trades were delayed later than usual. At nine o'clock a commotion was heard about another carcass not far away from the ship. The ugly beast had reached up a few of his tentacles and grappled the whale, trying to pull it down, but the flesh would tear off and the carcass leap up half out of water.

Not till the devil-fish took the whale wholly in his arms did he accomplish what he designed. When the breeze freshened the anchor was quietly lifted, and the Fleetwing ran round into the haven. She anchored near the Bird's Nest, heartily glad to escape another encounter with their dreadful enemy.

Now that the ship was again fairly settled to her routine work the officers began to speculate about the probable circumstances of the galleon's wreck. As Uncle Joe still persisted in declaring that there was treasure in the Spanish vessel, and that the Fire Cross was the good genius meant to draw their attention to it, Braybrook induced the captain to spare a few men, and let him land and cut into the trees over the old argosy and determine the question.

This being agreed upon, the following morning, after an early breakfast, the mate took a gang of men — selecting the best wood-choppers among the crew — and pulled ashore, well supplied with axes and other implements required for the work. The undergrowth was found so dense on the bay-side that work was begun on the north shore, as it would be much cooler on the seaward side than in the harbor. The design was first to clear away all the trees and shrubbery over the arched way before breaking through the coral above the wreck. The brush and vines were cast into the sea, while all wood fit for burning was reserved for ship's use. By the end of the first day the men had cleared the woods sufficiently to see how the ancient galleon lay in the reef-bed.

When the old craft struck upon the submerged reef she was probably scudding before a typhoon, steering about W. S. W. The coral being then in active growth was slowly built upon every part of the vessel, and in time—a century perhaps—bridged over the entire hull to the thickness of three feet. At length, by slow growth, or some sudden upheaval of the sea-bottom, the reef emerged above the sea; soil began to accumulate, where palms and other thrifty plants found root, until the whole ring-shaped island took form upon the sea.

Three days' labor served to clear the wood entirely away from above the hulk forward to the foremast, which was still standing hidden among the tree-tops, the main and mizzen masts having broken short off at the deck. The men began work at the stern of the vessel, where the coral covering was three feet thick, increasing its thickness as they advanced in-shore. Over this coral archway was a stratum of rich soil, six feet deep. Part of this space above the vessel was occupied by a thick grove of palm-trees, where cocoa-nuts covered the surface to the depth of three feet. These were heaped up and saved to feed to hogs on board the ship.

The fourth day was spent shovelling away the earth and clearing the tangle of roots and vines, thickly burrowed into the crevices above the long-buried wreck. A pathway was also opened through the trees to the harbor, which gave the crew more direct communication with the ship.

On the fifth day, picks, crowbars and old axes were brought into use. The coral bridge was broken into and wholly cleared away to the foremast, leaving the main deck and bulwarks bare. This disclosed what was left of the three-storied poop-decks at the stern of the quaint old galleon, as well as the crooked sheer of the midship water-line; and it enabled them to see something of the ungainly orlop deck, two stories high, built from the bow back to the foremast. This outlandish build served to date her time of construction far back, prior to the Spanish Armada.

Upon the sixth day Mr. Morey joined the wrecking party, having convalesced enough to look after another gang of ten men that the captain could spare from ship work. The task of breaking through the deck into the hold was found much more laborious than anticipated. Every part of the buried wood-work had become crystallized with a thick, stony, coralline substance. In fact, most of the vessel's planking, deck-beams, casks and other packages found below were completely petrified, so that the men's work was like mining through rock. The coral grows fast to everything of wood, as shells adhere to rocks.

This stony condition of everything soon blunted the edge of axes and all other tools, necessitating the use of picks and crow-bars to break into the petrified antiquity. This greatly delayed work and overtaxed the mate's patience, who started on the

job without a particle of faith in finding treasure. Thinking he had a common wooden wreck to deal with, Braybrook expected to make short work of it; meanwhile he could gratify his curiosity about the construction of the very ancient craft.

The west side of the galleon was grown solid to the rock. On the east side of the wreck a water channel was found reaching through from sea to bay, of sufficient width and depth for the Fleetwing to sail through, but for the coral bridge arched over the hidden way. This was the devil's den, in which the hideous sea-beast had passed his days previous to finding the carcasses to feed upon. His return was watched for and greatly dreaded, for he was such a difficult creature to kill.

In demolishing what remained of the cabins and store-rooms on the poop-decks, a small, brass swivel cannon was exhumed from among the transom timbers. It was found encased in a block of coral big as a barrel, so that no one guessed what it was until it was partly broken into; when Braybrook found what it was, he bade the men leave the gun to be taken on board as a curiosity.

Captain Lawrence came ashore to note progress and see the coral-cased cannon. He at once suggested dragging the boat through the devil's den, alongside of the wreck, as the best method of transshipping what they wished to the Fleetwing. This was accomplished by floating a rope on a buoy through into the bay, where it was anchored and

buoyed, and could be used to ferry a boat back and forth as required.

The plan was acted upon at once. At first no one was found willing to remain in the boat while making the passage, lest the devil-fish or some of his family were within; but after the starboard boat had been dragged back and forth a few times, several were found willing to explore the underground way.

The cannon was the first piece of freight taken aboard through the devil's den. After it was hoisted upon the Fleetwing's deck the coral shell was knocked off, disclosing the long-buried relic. The date 1500 was found cast in the breech of the gun. Nearly three and a half centuries old. During the afternoon two wine casks were resurrected from the cabin store-rooms on the lower poop-deck. The casks were encased in coral, though less heavily than the gun. Branded upon both was found the date 1527.

This evidence seemed to be reliable enough for all purposes of research. With this date to start from, Captain Lawrence and the doctor read up every old narrative of Spanish voyages on board. One account mentioned the sailing, from Acapulco, of two galleons, called the "Luzon" and "Acapulco," in the year 1675; both laden with rich cargoes and treasure for the port of Manila. But the build of neither vessel corresponded with the wreck.

At last, when in despair of finding any record which would enlighten them upon the subject, the

captain came upon a soiled, coverless book among Cook's seven volumes of discoveries. It was a narrative of very ancient voyages, and promised well from the start. This book related the sailing of three richly laden argosies from a port called Zivat Lanejo, a rich mining town in latitude 20 degrees N., on the newly-acquired Pacific coast of New Spain.

“These quaintly built, ungainly-looking argosies,” continued the narrative, “were the galleon ‘Florida,’ carrying twenty guns and fifty men, commanded by Don Alvaro de Saavedra, the Spanish admiral; the full-decked caravel ‘Santa Iago,’ with forty-five men and ten guns; together with the small, half-decked caravel ‘Espiritu Santo,’ having fifteen men and no guns.

“These vessels sailed the last of October, 1527. All were bound to Luzon with merchandise and cathedral decorations; thence to the Spice Islands in the Banda sea to obtain an aromatic cargo for the home-land of Spain. These vessels comprised the second fleet that had endeavored to cross the newly-found Pacific — ten thousand miles wide — which Balboa had discovered from the cliffs of Panama in the year 1513. Magellan crossed the unknown ocean during the year 1521, confronted by death and starvation in his brave undertaking.

“Don Alvaro sailed in a charming season, one usually exempt from storms, so that the admiral had no anticipation of danger. He sailed a thousand leagues without mishap, steering due W., on the

supposed course for Manila. During all those pleasant days the two caravels found little trouble keeping company with the lordly admiral, and together the three winged their way before the trade-wind, skirting the northern limit of the tropic seas.

“The Santa Iago carried a goodly company of monks and priests of the holy Order of St. Augustine, with all the paraphernalia of a moving monastery, going to take charge of the new cathedral at Manila. One among the jolly looking priests was a stern, severe man, dressed in the most rigid style of his Order.

“The Florida was a large vessel for the times, and her three-storied poop-deck cabins were considered most imposing and grand. Her double orlop decks made light and airy habitations for the sailors and marines. The vessel’s excessively curved water-line was one of the erroneous notions of her time, which the next century but slowly amended.

“Most of the valuable and weighty part of the treasure was stowed in the Florida’s hold, and prolonged and imposing were the religious ceremonies held on her decks when the stout galleon was consecrated to her present service. Occasionally the Florida was hove-to and the convivial admiral would send his boat for the austere priest on the Santa Iago, presumably for some special religious service.

“Thus the Spanish fleet sailed three thousand miles together through the pleasant November days, and all went well, and none looked for danger upon

the apparently landless sea. Then came the baleful month of December, when the dread Kona storms lashed the yet undiscovered islands of Hawaii. Neither the admiral, nor any other white man, knew anything of the 'Ilas de Mesa,' — the table islands, — subsequently discovered by Juan Gaetano in 1555.

“The so-called Kona storms blow from some southern direction, accompanied by long continued squalls of blinding rain. Such a gale met Don Alvaro's fleet, and the admiral's stout galleon alone survived. The vessels kept together till the gale got to its worst, though as yet there was no rain to obstruct the view.

“The *Espiritu* was early disabled, and had to be left by her companions to her fate. The half-decked craft was repeatedly filled by monstrous seas. Her masts were carried away, and when last seen the water-logged caravel was drifting helpless before the storm. She was finally wrecked on Point Keei, Hawaii, the captain and a young nun being the only survivors.

“The crew of the *Santa Iago* fared badly, though being full-decked she kept her hold free. When the gale was at its worst, the *Florida* was seen to cast overboard her whole armament, gun after gun, though she rode the seas better than her companion.

“The gale veered to the S. E., bringing a deluge of rain, and the vessels were seen no more. The *Santa Iago* scud to the N. E., dead before the gale,

and was soon cast ashore upon Hawaii, and wrecked in Waimanu valley. The grand old priest was the only soul spared among the many dead strewn along the rock-bound coast. He was found clinging to a life-size image of the Virgin, bruised and insensible.

“The Kahuna — or priest — of the neighboring temple came and saw his brother priest lying by the great idol, and welcomed him as a good heathen of his own kind. The half-drowned man was taken to the temple, tenderly cared for, and became one of their number.

“The Virgin and Cross, compass and watch, belonging to the priest, were considerably placed among the hideous idols of the natives. Paa'o was the name given to the priest, in fond belief that the new-comer was a newly-embodied spirit of a remote ancestor who, when dying, had promised to return to his people. Such was the providential manner by which the first priest was introduced to the ancient heathens of Hawaii.

“Not a trace of the admiral's vessel was ever found. The vessels were watched for at Manila with great anxiety. A general grief was manifested for years after, as the loss of the cathedral shrines could not be replaced to the religious community of Luzon till long after.

“When the officials became convinced that the fleet was lost, vigorous search was made for the wrecks and kept up for many a year. It was the

means of discovering hundreds of unknown islands, among which was the Caroline group. But not until Gaetano found and explored Hawaii, and learned from the naturalized priest Paa'o the sad loss of at least two of the vessels, did the Luzon officials give up their search. It is recorded in the annals of that date that a typhoon swept the western Pacific in December, destroying many houses and wrecking hundreds of vessels about the Ladrões and Philippine Islands."

CHAPTER XXIV.

LASSOING THE MERMAID.

IT was a charming tropical evening. The officers were lounging about the after-part of the quarter-deck, smoking and chatting about the labors of the day, and the timely narrative of "Spanish Voyages" that the captain had unearthed from among his books. One and all sat gazing shoreward toward the moonlit wreck, the pros and cons of which had been weighed in all their bearings.

The result of their sixth day's labor had been most discouraging to all participants. The whole three stories of poop-cabins had been unhoused, stripped clean down to the flush-deck; bulkheads, state-rooms, pantries and storehouses laid bare, and but little of value had been disclosed to any but the antiquarian, to whom the mould of ages outweighs the glitter of gold. The whole main deck between fore and main masts had been broken up, laying open to view the main hold of the galleon, showing nothing but empty casks heavily encased in coral, which had once contained fresh water and provisions.

Tired of the discussion, one by one the officers settled into some restful, reclining position, and gave themselves up to the soft, slumberous influence of the night. The gibbous moon had waned till the profile of Diana lay enshrined in her oval disk of gold. Fore-and-aft, the ship's company were sensibly impressed with the witching influence of the kindly orb. Even Braybrook, after showing quite a display of temper at his ill luck on the wreck, now sat rapt in meditative silence, whiffing his solacing pipe in slow, thin wreaths about his head, in strong contrast to his previous rapid, spiteful puffs an hour since.

Shrewd old Uncle Joe, guided by the passive appearance of the mate's smoke, came quietly among the group and took his seat near Braybrook, with some half-disclosed intent. The wrinkled visage of the aged man beamed with sunshine of soul within,—an aspect of peace and quietude which, strangely enough, ever served to provoke the turbulent temper of the mate when things went wrong.

For an instant Braybrook did not notice Bailey. Presently his antagonism to the man began to show itself, though he had not seen who had approached. But the pensive smoke suddenly felt greater impetus working down the stem of the pipe. The relaxed pose of the mate began to grow tense, and the crow's-foot ruffled the calm aspect of his face, like a cat's-paw on the unruffled sea. Braybrook sprang up, and seeing who was near him, made an abrupt dive into the old prophet's peaceful ponderings :

“Well, Uncle Joe, what more have you got to say about that durned old wreck? Do you still insist that we shall find treasure in the tumble-down old hulk?” Braybrook resumed his impulsive smoking, as a method of preventing his saying too much, as Captain Lawrence would not sit by and see good old Uncle Joe pressed too hard.

“Yis, sah. No 'stake 'bout um dis time, Misser Braybruc. Dat treasur' yam dar, sartin' sure. Luke up dar, sah, an' seed dat Dinah gal in de moon. Dat purty gal's face yam jus' de culler ob de gole yo's gwine ter fine in dat ole ark ober dar.”

“Blame me, if I'll believe a word of it till I see the durned stuff. That moon-face *is* a little queer,” —following the old man's finger-point to the orb. “It's the best-defined yellow gal ever seen there before. That some of your doings, Mr. Bailey?” —said with a sarcastic leer at his fellow officer.

“No, sah. Dat's de Lawd's doin's. Dat sweet-faced yaller gal am de Dinah angil what lubs dis niggar. An' she yam jus' cum ter spoke ar word ob peace ter yo', Misser Braybruc.”

“You git out with your nonsense. You'll make a fellow believe the moon's made of green cheese, pretty soon,” exclaimed the irate mate.

“Fac', sah. Dat yere angil am cum ter 'courage all de dejected brudders what yam sarchin' fo' treasur'. Doan yer seen dat butiful white cloud, full ob lubly moon-dogs? Dat's de robe ob glory fo' dat sweet angil wid de face in de moon. Luke

ar dar, sah ! jus seen dat ar yaller gal smile on dis po' ole brack brudder. I spec dat yam de angil Hope, cum ter spoke ar word ter yo', Misser Braybruc."

"Oh, fudge, Uncle Joe, what makes a colored Christian always prate about yellow gals and white gals, instead of nigger gals? Don't you expect to find nigger angils up in Kingdom Come to look after you?"

"No, sah-e-e ! Brudder Ham'll be jus' ez white up dar in heben ez Massa Shem, yo' bet all yere ole boots on dat, sah. Why, brudder Braybruc, dis yere niggarr culler yam on'y skin deep. Jus' ar leedle eb'ny on de cut'cle, what de chilun ob Yisreal gut whin dey trabel inter Ye-gypt, arter baby Moses."

"That's pretty likely. Can't stuff that gospe into me."

"Dat's so, sah, sure pop. Why, Misser Braybruc, I specs yo' har'ly kno' dis chile up dar, in de lan' o' glory, I'se luke so spec'ble. 'Caus' yo' kno', sah, dat de'd niggars tek off dar brack clo's when dey go ter heben."

"Well, that'll do," said Captain Lawrence, breaking in upon the mate's ill-tempered chaffing. "Now, gentlemen, I feel almost certain that the wreck before us is the long-lost Florida, that I have been reading about ; and as there is no evidence of her having been wrecked by any one, there must be something valuable on board of her."

"Yes," responded the doctor, "the build of this

old galleon is the same as described in the ‘Spanish Voyages;’ the date we have found on the wine casks confirms it.”

“But where in time is the treasure?” urged Braybrook. “I don’t think there’s anything but empty casks in her hold.”

“Nevertheless, we’ll pull her to pieces down to the keelson, before we give it up,” rejoined the captain firmly.

“It will take a month to do that, sir. The coral growth below water is twice as thick as we have found it above.”

“Never mind all that. If it takes six months, we’ll make a thorough job of it. To-morrow, get up a heavy pendant over the wreck, rigging it either upon shears or on the trees; then reeve you a three-fold tackle, that will serve to hoist out every cask or other package from below. If need be, we will tear up every deck plank fore-and-aft, and lay the whole hold open to view.”

“All right, sir. If thorough work is wanted, a heavy tackle-purchase will be useful,” responded the mate, who always yielded gracefully when the captain “took the pig by the ear” in a matter of discipline.

The new cook was ordered to prepare breakfast earlier than usual, as the evening’s excitement about the wreck had the effect to impart new zeal in the laborious search for the treasure. As the day had been toilsome for the wreckers, Dr. Greville offered

to take the watch till midnight, as he had frequently done before. In twenty minutes after the tiresome discussion was ended, not a soul on deck but the doctor was awake.

As we all know, Greville had a paramount interest in something besides the wreck. The mermaid was his special infatuation. Being only a passenger on the ship he could claim no part in the treasure, if any were found. Hence his excessive kindness in relieving the toil-worn sailors of the midnight watch. It was now nearly a month since the mermaid had been seen. To-night, the little water-girl greatly occupied the doctor's thoughts. Thus far, his recent watchings had been fruitless.

Since the ship last came into the bay, Greville had again taken to sleeping on the transom, where he could watch from one of the large stern windows for the object of his solicitude. Nightly he climbed upon the transom with renewed desire to once more interview his little Morete.

During many such previous night-watches he would fall asleep, to wake and watch again, deep into the night. The patience of the man in this matter was that of a genuine lover. So frequently had he pondered upon the subject, that he often dreamed of meeting Morete, and wandering hours among the coral grottoes down in the weird, forbidden haunts of the deep sea. Strolling hand in hand with the loved water-girl, together they interviewed the grim old sea-gods, questioned them of the buried

treasures, and nameless, hidden secrets of the vasty deep. There his mortal soul was tested, as never before, by the dulcet tones of the singing sirens, that, but for Morete, would have snatched him from his accustomed life above the sea, and held him in their toils forever.

All these delicious dreamings, together with his ecstasie longing for further knowledge of the sea-lore, Greville prudently kept to himself. Yet so long had he dwelt upon the little water-witch, and his pleasant pastimes with her under the starlit sea, that at length, that which had been to him but the flimsiest of dreams had now become graven upon his memory like some much-loved scenes of reality.

The doctor passed the long, silent hours of his watch sitting there in the moonlight with ear and eye alert, listening to every notable sound that breke upon the ghostly stillness of the night. At twelve m. Hoogley was called, and in turn roused out his boat's crew to take the watch till three o'clock.

Half provoked at the pains he was taking, Greville placed his bed nearer to the open window than usual. Tired with prolonged watching, he dropped asleep at once, and was soon dreaming of seeking the mermaid among the coral groves and sandy lanes of the sea-bottom. He dreamed that he was kept long waiting for his pretty sea-nymph to come forth. He could hear her singing in the distance, and at length she came to him with outstretched hands, lips parted with smiles, and eyes brightening with gladness.

As he advanced to greet the charming creature, she slowly receded, though with ever-extended hand and looks beaming with welcome, till at length she vanished like a morning mist from his view. This so annoyed the dreamer that he half aroused from his deep sleep, and sprang up to look about him, listening, as in his dream, for the voice of Morete.

There, to his surprise and delight, he beheld the graceful mermaid, half reclining on the dark water beneath his window. She lay in the shadow of the stern, calling "Morete, Morete!" her swaying figure blotting out the mirrored stars, as she watched the doctor's face with unmistakable looks of gladness. Toying with her hair, as might a human maiden, she swam playfully back and forth across the stern, like a sportive seal attracted by a strain of music.

Quietly and cautiously, Greville worked his body out of the window till he could stretch his arms down almost to the timid creature, as she circled nervously about the rudder. Little by little the mermaid quieted down, coming nearer and nearer, as if almost willing to return the doctor's friendly greeting.

At length she came very near, till he felt her warm breath upon his face. With a sudden impulse she raised her lithe brown body half out of water, and shook her long black hair from her face and arms; advancing a trifle nearer, she raised her tiny hands in supplicating attitude almost within the doctor's

grasp, repeating her pathetic call in the low, warbling voice of a singing bird.

Like a timid child, Morete seemed coaxing herself, little by little, to yield to the proffered endearments, till fear of the human creature above her almost went out of her soft dark eyes. Almost her taper fingers reached the doctor's outstretched hands, when some one in the cabin grasped his feet and asked :

“What's up there?” It was the captain.

Answering in low, quiet tones, Greville begged the captain to hold fast to his legs, that he might reach lower down from the window. In an instant more the cold tips of the mermaid's fingers touched the doctor's warm palm, to be quickly withdrawn again and again, till at length she became assured, and her two pretty hands were laid willingly in the friendly grasp of her companion, though trembling with an unconquerable fear.

It was a moment of intense excitement to them both. The magnetic thrills of the one ran leaping through the frame of the other ; the girl's lips paled and reddened in quick succession, and the man's face glowed as from the heat of a furnace. The tones of the doctor's cooing words charmed the timid creature, till her eyes brightened and grew languid by turns. The girl answered as best she could in broken bird-notes, in evident response to his endearments.

When Greville drew her up by the hands, and en-

deavored to stroke her hair, she uttered a cry of alarm, and tore her hands from his grasp. Swimming out from under the stern, as if to account for the noise she heard on deck, she came slowly and suspiciously back, and suffered the doctor to retain her hands as before.

At that moment a lasso, made of heavy rope, came thundering down upon the head of the confiding creature, flung from the taffrail above, and pulled up with a jerk, with intention of catching the girl by the neck.

Swift as the nimblest fish, Morete tore away from the cruel noose and dived into the black waters, to be seen no more. The brute above was Tom Crawford. Having discovered the mermaid by her outcry, and seen her swim out on the quarter, there came visions of Barnum and his promised gold.

Quickly knotting a running bowline with the spanker vang, Tom cast his noose fairly down over the head of the girl, hoping to lasso the amphibious creature, and make her his lawful prize. The cruel deed was well executed, but the agile girl slipped out her head, and Tom caught only a long tress of her raven hair, four feet long, and soft as the fairest lady's.

Greville drew himself quickly in through the window, frantic with rage, and sprang out upon deck, more deliberately followed by the captain, who did not quite understand what had happened. Finding Tom unknotting his bowline, and deploring

his lost prize, Greville sprang at him, and collaring the burly sailor, shook him as a weather leech is shaken in a gale. Had his strength been equal to the task the doctor would have tumbled the astonished Tom into the sea, but it was the lithe, springy tiger assailing an elephant — and bulk prevailed.

“Hello, Doctor, is yer moony, mon? It’s Tom yer’s fightin’; him you’ve physicked mony ar day wid yer blue-mass, an’ yer glaubers. Hold up, I sez. Hold up, Doc. I’ll take ’nother dose o’ calomel, if yer’s bent on’t. Avast there! keep yer top-mauls quiet. Don’t try ter plug yer best friend. Blast me, but ther feller’s luney.”

And Tom grasped his assailant, and held him harmlessly out at arm’s length. Finding himself a prisoner, the breathless doctor took a spell with his tongue:

“You infernal booby! why did you harm that gentle creature?”

“Nuthin’ much, Doc. On’y tryin’ ter cotch ar spec’m in fur Barnum. The critter would show well in ar museum — stuff’er out wid tan-bark, yer know.”

“You stupid monkey! I’ll stuff you with tan-bark. If you throw so much as a rope-yarn at her I’ll fling a harpoon through your big carcass, and we’ll see how much sheep’s-oil a Nantucket lubber will try out.”

“All right, Doc. On’y grease yer pot wid pork-fat, not ter hurt ar feller’s feelin’s by singein’ ther hide.”

“Tom, you ought to be hanged for that cruel deed.”

“Blast my toplights! Doc., am yer gitin’ sweet on thet fishy critter? Why, mon, I’ve seen dozens on um in me day, an’ never lost me ’cart ter nary one o’ ther pretty beasts.”

The captain here stepped to the front and ended the fracas. He forbade Tom meddling with the mermaid again, and ordered him off forward, having deprived him of the much-prized lock of hair, which he gave to the doctor.

After Greville cooled down a little he related to the officers — who had all been roused out by the rumpus — what an intimate acquaintance he had succeeded in making with the mermaid, when Tom flung down his rough rope upon her head, and probably scared her off for good.

In the morning, a few hours after the wrecking party had gone to their work, the doctor got permission to take a boat and crew of ship-keepers for a pull round to the windward side of the island, to gather shells. Leaving the harbor, he coasted the shore to the east, until the far-reaching undulations began to break heavily upon the beach, and compelled him to land.

Hauling the boat ashore under a small coral projection, the doctor led the men along the narrow strip of coral sand, working their way as best they could under the boughs of the dense tropical foliage, till they came where shells and other marine curiosities were numerous. Here he bade the seamen select a half boat-load of conchs, cowries and countless

other aquatic beauties, which would be acceptable to their shipmates.

Leaving the seamen to cull the rarest from a beach three feet deep with broken shells, so tumbled and tossed by the in-rolling breakers, and transport them to the boat, he wandered away to the extreme weather point.

For awhile he seated himself where the highest surf dashed grandly in and breasted back the tropical growth, leaving a fine wide beach for the vast rollers to climb and gambol upon, and almost forgot time and space, till one of the men came to say the boat was loaded.

Greville sent the man back to his companions, and arose to follow, when he was tempted to look beyond the point. He found that the heavy breakers extended a mile to the north, but there was a break in the beach where a small embayed cove reached into the forest. He strode on, determined to explore the quiet nook, and his ear was soon greeted with notes of song. He could not be mistaken, it was the voice of the mermaid.

Walking carefully on, lest his noisy footsteps among the shells should alarm the object of his solicitude, he turned a massive boulder that Neptune in some angry mood had hurled upon the shore, and there was Morete. The girl sat to her waist in the water, just clear of the spume of the breakers, feeding a brood of small fishes with a banana which she picked to pieces with her fingers.

The sun shone hot upon the shore, but the girl sat in the shade of drooping shrubs, and all about her hung flowering vines that trailed down almost to the water, from the out-bending trees. Taking off his shoes, to approach as near as he could, Greville cautiously skirted the cove until he stood among the blossoming shrubs just behind the mermaid.

Watching her for awhile, interested in the girl's pantomimic sport with the fishes, some of which she scooped up in her hand, singing to the tiny creatures with her head swaying to and fro, as a child perks and plays with her doll, the doctor could hardly restrain himself from making known his presence. But he was spying upon one of ocean's strangest anomalies, and the naturalists of the world would expect him to make the best use of his opportunities.

Dozens of her finny playmates sported with her hair and made merry pastime. Seizing upon a stray lock, or a single fibre, they swam swiftly to the limit of the lock, then shook the shining textile and leaped and floundered with all the mimicry of children at play. Morete watched them, and with her slender fingers combed out her black masses and spread it thin upon the water for yet other sportive fishes to toy with.

The noontide sun mounted high in the heavens, and the men beginning to hunger for their mid-day meal came in search of the doctor, and discovered the mermaid.

“Heave ahead there, me hearties! Here’s ther

mermaid," cried the foremost to his straggling companions.

The sea-girl shot forth into the breakers like a startled fawn. Without an instant's hesitation, she dived into the great roaring surf about to break upon the shore, and reappeared beyond the three inner rollers, faced about to contemplate the intruders.

The men gathered about the doctor, on the nearest point, to watch the graceful creature frolic among the rollers. Diving under the incoming surf, the girl worked her way far out to the outermost breaker. Watching for a big comber, she awaited its coming, and let it grapple her girlish form in its foaming arms and bear her shoreward on its topmost crest till very near in to the beach, and the men would spring up to intercept her; then she dipped down under the breaking surf and let the undertow sweep her seaward, as before. It was a pleasing sight, showing the completest mastery over the wild waves.

At length they returned to the boat, and pulled for the ship. Captain Lawrence expressed great interest in the doctor's description of the mermaid, and her pretty pastime with the fishes. It was agreed that the men should not again intrude upon her haunts, and that the doctor should hereafter have every facility to perfect his acquaintance, and capture her alive if he could.

CHAPTER XXV.

SEARCHING FOR GOLD.

WHEN Braybrook began clearing away the forest about the wreck, he purposely left a tall palm-tree growing on each side of the old galleon from which to suspend a pendant to hoist packages from the hold. It now became necessary to bring the tops of the two trees together for the purpose above mentioned.

The trees were eighty feet high, and an agile Kanaka was wanted to climb their slim trunks. But Prince John, the captain's boat steerer, had not wholly recovered from the wounds inflicted by Mocha Dick, and the best substitutes were two lithe sailor lads from among the crew. After a hard climb the boys attached a strong tail-block to the top of each tree; through these blocks light ropes were rove, as leaders, by which a large two-inch rope could be drawn up, sufficiently strong to sustain a pendant.

After knotting the rope around the top of the starboard tree, just under the dense growth of cocoa-

nuts and leaves, and reeving it through the eye of a sixty-foot pendant, the rope was rove through the port tail-block, and the tops of the two trees were bowsed nearly together. A massive tackle was hooked to the pendant and made to hang plumb over the hold, or it could be guyed out so as to lower heavy packages into a boat alongside.

By the aid of this powerful purchase, what remained of the fossilized deck was soon torn up as far aft as the heavy bulkhead that separated the vessel's run from the main hold. The captain's order was to break out and examine every package in the hold before breaking into the bulkhead. With ten feet of water in the hold this was no easy task, as every cask was encased in stone, and very heavy to hoist; and sometimes several casks were grown together in one coral covering.

The remaining casks were all Spanish-made wine tierces. The lower tiers, having probably been filled with fresh water for ship's use, had rotted entirely away, the only trace of them being many hoops, without staves, and only now and then a cask-head, made of some wood of great preservative power—a kind of pine full of pitch.

Some of the wine-casks were still in good state of preservation. They were crystallized within and without, with from one to three inches of coral. It was difficult to tell what the original lading of the old argosy had been. Every cask now found was full of water. The water in the wine-casks was clear,

while the contents of other casks had rotted into a slimy pulp and become petrified. None of the casks could be hooked to with canhooks, they were so encased in coral, and it was laborious work to sling everything for hoisting.

The hold contained hundreds of blind fishes, pitiful objects, with their white and sightless eyes, caused by being immured in total darkness. Straying into the hold through some small chinks in the stoven bottom, they delayed returning until they grew too large for egress. In places where the bottom had been wholly crushed out at the time of wrecking, stout coral trees had been built up in the hold ten feet high. These growths conformed to every curve and angle of the vessel's side, adapted their growth to the deck-timbers, and built around the stump of the mainmast.

At the end of eight days' labor the casks and fossilized lumber were mostly removed from the hold, and Braybrook announced that on the following day, as soon as he could construct a raft to work on, he would break into the bulkhead. As the run under the cabins could be but a small place, and was usually stowed with small-stores and various niceties for the cabin people, the mate had not a particle of hope of finding treasure there.

In the dog-watch that evening Braybrook expressed a little more discouragement than usual. Perhaps because he was very tired with his long day's excitement, or he might have wished to entice

Joe Bailey into a renewal of his exhilarating prophecy, which the grim old seer now proclaimed more strenuously than ever. It needed but an aggressive word from the mate to start him off on the topic.

“I’m ’bout ready to give up my shore-job to you, Mr. Bailey.”

“Doan yer kick de bucket jes yit, Misser Bray-bruc. Dem yere yaller fellers be dar, sah, no ’stake ’bout um.”

“All bosh. What new evidence have you got to prate about?”

“Hiah! new yevidenc’, ha? Why, sah, de gude Lawd bin heah dis chile’s pray’r on de Bird’s Nest las’ nite, an’ ebbry t’ing yam all clar now. An’ mo’n all dat, sah, butiful spir’its hubber roun’ Joe Bailey in de wissons ob de nite, an’ it wuz gibbin ter dis po’ sinner ter luke inter de bow’ls ob de yearth. An’ dis niggars one peeper pupertrates inter de hole ob dat ole cat’maran an’ seed de gole, an’ de silber, an’ de big yimages, eubber’d all ober wid gems dat shine like de stars in de heaben.”

“The devil you did! I tell you, Uncle Joe, there ain’t a thing worth a copper in the hold of that durned old rat-trap.”

“Tut, tut, sah, dish yere chile duzn’t sail yunder dose cullers. I’s de Lawd’s niggars, brudder Bray-bruc. I’s abscond dat ole ebil pussen, eber since Mad Dick put dese yere kinks inter my walkers. So doan yo’ go fo’ ter disrespee’ Gawd A’mighty frough dis niggars.”

“ Ah, well, Uncle Joe, we’ll see by to-morrow night ; we’ll know then whose colors you sail under — the Lord’s or the devil’s. There’s nothing for’ard of the bulkhead, and I’ll smash into that soon as I can build a raft ; and if we find treasure I’ll study to be a nigger parson for a nigger church ; but if we don’t find anything, we’ll all know that Satan’s got his weather paw on you, Joe Bailey.”

“ Mussy seks, brudder Braybruc ! I’s feard yo’s too tuf ar subjie ter preach de gawspel. ’Cause ’tain’t gole dat sables de wick’d pussens. An’ I spec yo’ rudder hab de gole dan de glory, sah.”

But the mate had had his say, and he smoked his pipe in silence, too much wrought up to discuss the subject calmly with any one. Uncle Joe went to his stateroom to pray for his white brother, for whose redemption he would have given his right hand.

Late in the afternoon of the following day, after a substantial raft had been constructed to serve as staging for the workmen, picks, axes and crow-bars were vigorously plied against the stone-covered bulkhead that extended across the after-hold.

It was nearly dark before an opening could be made to let daylight through the planking sufficiently for the mate to determine that the whole run was closely stowed with casks and boxes, which looked very much like finding something of value.

The top tiers, being wholly out of water, were less thickly covered with coral than the forward cargo had been. After the men had been permitted to

take a moment's look at the compact mass through the small opening, Tom, Buntline and English Bill were ordered to hew away lustily.

Ingress was soon made large enough for one of the small, oblong boxes to be pried up, roused out on the raft, and hoisted to the poop-deck. The box was strongly bound with wooden hoops. The mate seized an axe, and with hasty blows soon demolished the coral covering, cut the hoops and broke open the box; there, to the joy of all, was the long-buried treasure.

Braybrook had opened into a box of silver ingots, but they were too tarnished and black to impress the crew with their value. A larger box of another shape from the next tier had been broken out in the meantime, and was now ready to be hoisted from the raft. This box was so heavy that it tipped the raft, and made the workmen in a hurry to have it hoisted on deck before it found its way to the bottom of the hold.

Frantic hands grappled the tackle soon as the sling could be adjusted, and landed the big package on the poop. Axes were applied to the coral shell, the rough oaken hoops were cut, and the cover knocked off. The case was found packed with gold plate and rare service for cathedral use, sufficient to make every eye luminous with delight.

A wild shout rang out over the harbor and echoed through the forest, as if a hundred madmen had broken bounds. It was a shout that interpreted an

insure joy to their shipmates on board, for when Braybrook ran to the bay-shore to hail the captain, he found Captain Lawrence and Uncle Joe were already clambering down into the boat alongside, coming ashore to inspect for themselves.

Thousands of startled birds gathered about the tree-tops, twittering and perking, and stretching their necks from the overhanging boughs. Parrots and paroquets came fluttering in flocks over the wreck, screeching their discordant cries, till the very air was filled with crimson and green.

Even the gayly-plumed paradise birds forgot their stateliness, and hastily peopled the tall palms, blending their senseless squawk with the wild jubilations of the crew. Countless other small birds came straggling to the rescue, from the deep forest, glinting every green twig and swaying bough with flashing plumage of crimson and gold.

The delirious joy of that hour may not be told, it can only be lived and felt by its participants. The wild ecstacy of a rover among new-found treasure has no synonym for its delight. There was now no doubt but the long-buried wreck was the Spanish galleon "Florida," and its discovery would become a matter of historical interest to the world. Her mysterious disappearance had interested two generations of ancient mariners to keep up a never-ending search, and now the very novelty of her discovery would be looked upon as an almost providential occurrence.

Very brief was the evening gossip of that eventful day. All hands had lingered so long about the wreck that it was past the dog-watch hours before supper was eaten. And as orders were passed for an early breakfast, so that the men could be at work at break of day, all the working hands were piped down to their berths for a full night's sleep,—the ship-keepers being ordered to stand the night-watches.

During the tenth day the wreckers succeeded in breaking out nearly a million dollars' worth of gold and silver, and that too without making much of a hole in the great storehouse of treasure. The raft had to be made much more substantial to sustain the packages, as the deeper tiers were more heavily encased in coral than those above the surface.

Most of the small boxes were found full of silver bars, though nearly a hundred of them contained gold ingots of the purest virgin ore. These ingots, of both gold and silver, were probably designed for the government mint at Manila, which, in those years, coined for all the Indian possessions of Spain, and in fact furnished the coin for more than half of the commercial world.

The men soon came to easily distinguish the Spanish marks on the boxes, after the coral crusting was removed, so as to know at sight whether the contents were silver or gold. There soon came to be such sameness about the small, oblong boxes that all interest in them subsided. But the curiosity of

all was at the topmost pitch to break into the large, heavy cases, as many of these contained richly-chased services of gold, and images of the Saviour and apostles, constructed for some vast cathedral. Some of the golden images were more than life-size, and were a fortune in themselves. Some of the largest and less weighty cases were packed with chalices, ewers, and massive candlesticks, with costly fixtures decorated with gems. Several cases were filled with crosses, inlaid or plain, but all wrought of pure gold, and of great value. No wonder that curiosity ran high while unearthing such wealth, after it had lain entombed in this subterranean cavern for three and a quarter centuries.

Fast as the packages were opened and their contents explored, the carpenter nailed on the covers and the cases were piled upon the poop to be dried in the sun. In the meantime careful preparations were required for transshipping such weighty treasure. Two of the stoutest boats were selected and lashed side by side, with studding-sail booms across their gunwales, on which was built a broad platform, the best possible safeguard against capsizing.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A NIGHT WITH THE MERMAID.

WHILE the crew had been kept to their daily search for treasure in the past week, Greville had been persistently seeking another interview with the mermaid, in whom he hourly became more interested. While aboard ship, the doctor kept vigilant watch about the bay, and he had twice worked his way along the shore from the wreck to the point.

The ardent man still believed that with fair opportunity he could win the sea-girl's confidence, and in the end might succeed in taking her on board unharmed. Being a fine linguist, he aspired to yet being able to interpret the mermaid's aqueous vernacular, which certainly possessed some very human articulations.

If he succeeded in this, what wealth of sea-lore would be revealed to the world from regions wholly unexplored. So greatly was the doctor permeated with this idea, that if Captain Lawrence would promise to return for him at the end of a year's cruise, he had determined to remain on the island

and secure the mermaid. Failing in that plan, it had become a question if Agassiz, who was his father's friend, would not willingly be at the expense of sending for him, in consideration of the wonderful knowledge of submarine species he would be able to impart.

Revolving these problems in his mind, for the fourth time the doctor wandered round to the east point in search of the mermaid. The afternoon was hot, almost unendurable where the beach was exposed to the sun, and great was Greville's relief when he at length seated himself in the cool shade of the palms, facing the sea-breeze and the surf. Sitting there with his back to the great white boulder, which was his mark for Morete's swimming place, he began his eager watch.

Hours passed, and the brooding man still lay rapt in pleasant reveries, lulled by the murmur of the brisk trades in the swaying trees, and listening to the grand old anthem of the in-rolling breakers, whose humid breath fanned his hot face. The evening hour approached, and yet Greville forbore to wend his way back to the ship.

The long watch at length became distasteful, and he sprang up to stretch himself. Looking about for something to quench his thirst, he stepped aside among a cluster of orange trees and sought the refreshment he required. Wandering about from tree to tree, Greville was surprised to discover a sharp-pointed paddle, with richly-carved handle of koa

wood; this he secured as a trophy. Not far from the paddle lay scattered the complete wreck of a small canoe. Here was the only evidence of man's handiwork yet found upon the island.

Looking closely about him, Greville became convinced that he stood upon a spot much frequented by the mermaid. Culled flowers were strewn about, and decayed wreaths of crimson hibiscus and golden jasmine blossoms were everywhere to be seen. Here was a pretty mound of sea-shells, built by some intelligent hand; there a circular enclosure made of various colored pebbles, built about what seemed meant for an image in human shape. Was the sea-girl trying to imitate the men who had startled her from her covert the week before?

If the doctor had risen with the intention of going to the ship, he now changed his mind and seated himself against the cradle-shaped roots of a palm. As the twilight approached, the woods resounded with bird-song, and the wind and the waves were fast subsiding. While he sat listening to the blended harmonies of the dying trades and the subdued symphonies of the sea, Greville was startled by hearing low, sad notes of another kind, joining with perfect cadence in the mournful monotone of surf and wind.

At first thought, the strange melody seemed possibly the vesper-song of some far-off bird in the forest, but after closer inspection, the mellow strains were found to rise and fall with the ever-changing sea-dirge, and could not be so construed.

Presently the melodious voice began to grow nearer and nearer, filling the air like the hum of an approaching bee, but still lifting and lowering its tones to the rise and fall of the in-rolling surf. After a while the mysterious singer forgot to follow the roar of the wailing waters, singing a low, sad rhapsody, some sudden uprising of grief that brought tears to the eyes of the listener.

It was now certain that the grief-stricken song came from Morete, but where the wailing sea-girl could be secreted was difficult to discover. Sometimes the listener leaned his ear to the ocean, fully expecting to behold the water-witch grottoed under the arching crests of the towering breakers. Again the clear bird-notes came welling out from the drooping palm fronds, but this also proved a delusion.

At times the shifting cadence came fluttering down from a passing trade-cloud, flying low upon languid wings, but the cloud tarried just long enough to scatter its raindrops, and winged softly away to the west, proffering its moist blessings unto the verdure of other isles. Thus the twilight closed down upon the half-dazed man, who still watched and waited, and gave himself up, body and soul, to mastering the mystery.

After the sun went down the song notes died wholly away. Presently Greville heard a quick rustling among dry leaves that quite startled him, in the gathering gloom. Catching the direction of the

sound, he discovered the mermaid descending from the top of a dead palm-tree, a tree with sere fronds and a bent trunk, leaning far out over the water.

Greville could only distinguish the outline of the girl's form in the dusk. He could just follow the clasped hands as they dropped from ridge to ridge on the slim trunk of the beaded tree; could dimly see the lower extremity of the agile creature cling to the trunk while the hands were shifting their hold, and then observe the pliant tail leap backward for another foothold below.

When the mermaid reached the ground, instead of crawling upon her belly, — as the doctor looked to see her do, — strange to say she kept an upright position and moved gracefully along over the coral sand to the great boulder, seating herself where Greville sat when he first came from the ship.

Leaving the timid creature to a few minutes' quiet, the doctor then ventured to call to her, making use of the girl's own euphonious appeal: "Morete!" and speaking in low, soft tones, not to frighten her. With the bound of a bird taking wing the startled girl sprang upright, ready to fly, but stood trembling, in pose showing the keenest alarm.

Flinging back her long hair from her face, she stood looking and listening, irresolute how to act; first peering back into the forest gloom, and then into the in-rolling surf, for echo had so multiplied the ghostly voice that she knew not which way to flee.

Not hearing the voice repeated, the girl began to doubt her own ears, and soon quieted herself and climbed to the top of the big boulder, seating herself as if nothing had alarmed her. She wondered at her own delusion, and in apparent ridicule of her fears she began to repeat the doctor's call, mimicking the ghostly tones of the sweet refrain: "Morete! Morete!"—seeking to reassure herself that there was no real danger.

Greville again ventured to repeat the call, lest it should become too dark for her to see who he was. As Morete sprang down from the rock the doctor advanced slowly toward her, speaking quietly in most winsome voice, and extending his hand in welcome, as he had previously done from the cabin window.

Morete seemed to recognize the doctor at once, and though she stood in the act of springing away, she did not run. The girl's hesitation showed a wish for companionship; but such was her dread of peril—after her rude treatment in the bay—that Greville was in doubt whether she would stay or fly, if he took another step.

But darkness was already upon them and he could barely see her outline from where he stood. He advanced quietly, step by step, with proffered hands and gentle words of endearment, and made the attempt to reach her. The girl did not move from her position. He approached near enough to see that she stood with raised, clasped hands, in attitude

of fear and supplication. The terrified creature was trembling so that he could hear her shake. Her breath, which had come quick and hard, now ceased, as if she had lost the power of respiration.

Continuing to advance, Greville's soft words and magnetic voice served to delay the doubting creature, till his outstretched hand touched the soft shoulder seen protruding through her silken tresses. Shrinking back repeatedly from his first touches, while successive shudders ran through her lithe frame, the agitated creature hesitated between hopes and fears,—as the lonely flower shrinks from the first touch of the summer breeze.

The bewildered girl was momentarily growing more approachable. Thus assured, Greville reached and took her dainty hands in his. Though she yielded to his magnetic touch, and rendered herself a willing captive, yet it was with mingled emotions,—part pleasure and part fear,—for her eyes shone lustrous through the darkness, and her hot breath now beat quick upon the face of her trusted companion.

When Greville saw that Morete had gained sufficient control over her alarm, he drew her gently down to a seat in the grass, where they could lean restfully against the boulder. It was not long before the girl's rapid breathing abated its turbulence, and her young heart grew less tumultuous; until she stilled down its wild rapture and her heaving bosom lay gently palpitating against her com-

panion's. Gradually her trembling hands grew still within his grasp; then her wide eyes slowly relaxed their staring tension, till, at length, he felt her long lashes winking confidently against his cheek, and he knew that she had given herself into his keeping, as a human maiden yields to the wooing of a favored lover.

With what searching scrutiny had the keen-eyed man of science noted every rising emotion and abating fear in this untutored habitant of the sea. What was his surprise to observe how human-like were her actions. With what girlish avidity she accepted his endearments, and hastened to recompense him in return by twining her arms about him and laying her cheek lovingly to his, as every virile thing in nature — from the whale to the minnow — has a propensity for doing.

Thus these two remote types of being sat there in the night-gloom beneath the sighing palms, clinging to each other like a pair of human lovers, with only the in-rolling breakers and the starry sky for companionship. Little by little the magnetic power of the man won upon the pretty sea-girl, till every vestige of fear forsook her, and her beating heart throbbed in unison with his own.

The mermaid seemed gifted with a power of seeing in the dark, and with curiosity almost equal to a human maiden's she soon fell to investigating every part of her companion; for he was a strange, new specimen with which she was not familiar. Peering

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lovingly into his eyes, to observe if it annoyed him, she ran her taper fingers through his hair, stroked his beard and looked through the opening of his gaping shirt, greatly pleased with the white skin of the neck and chest ; ever murmuring little outbursts of admiration over what she felt and saw, in her strange, sweet jangle of unknown utterances. Why her companion sought to hide his soft white skin in clothing she could not understand, while she found even her raven tresses quite bothersome when swimming.

Thus prompted by her initiative, the doctor proceeded to partially examine the piscatorial formation of his companion. He found nothing in the least piscine about the upper part of her body, for her flesh there was in no way different from his own. She evidently had a large pair of lungs, and made full use of them. The heart was strong and roomy, and beat with great vigor ; both the circulation and respiration were powerful, though a trifle more accelerated than in the human species.

Just how the little water-girl could suspend respiration, and remain under water at her pleasure, even this man of science could not detect. He could only surmise that the *foramen ovale* of the heart must remain open at such times, with the power to subsequently close the orifice when making full use of the lungs. This point, of such great interest to physiologists, could only be determined by an examination while under water, or by a post-mortem dissection.

Having satisfied himself beyond doubt that Morete's body and bust were soft-skinned as a child's, and as shapely in every line and lineament as the Venus of old, the doctor's curiosity now impelled him to thoroughly examine the fish part of the girl's caudal extremity. While sitting there through the long night hours Morete's tail-part was under and behind her. Greville had frequently heard the pedal appendage thrashing nervously about in the grass, and mentally pictured a pair of flukes like those of a porpoise.

Disengaging the arm that was about her waist from the massive tangle of her hair, Greville reached back to explore for the flukes. The only caudal member found within easy reach was smooth and flesh-like, not larger than a plump person's leg. Exploring further, — far as he could reach, with the girl lying upon his breast, — great was his surprise to find what seemed to be a veritable foot, a fleshy extremity having five toes like his own.

Greville's touch upon her caudal part greatly annoyed or tickled the water-girl, and she uttered an exclamation of impatience, which led him to desist importuning her for the time. How fast the mystery deepened! Greville sat there, dazed with the strange partial discovery he had made. Where was the usual tapering appendage of a mermaid? Was it possible that Morete's tail terminated in a single foot? Or were there two feet appended to one extremity?

At the risk of annoying the girl, who had sleepily twined her arms about his neck, the doctor again reached back and satisfied himself that he had detected a well-shaped foot and the lower part of a leg, as well formed as a robust maiden's. As it was yet too dark to distinguish whether any part of the lower amalgam of the mermaid was covered with fish scales or flesh, the doctor gave himself up to an hour's reflection upon the novelty of his situation, and the singularity of the being lying there in his arms.

Morete was certainly a creature of rare intelligence, and though wild as a fawn, she was beautiful as a flower. Thus he lay contemplating the strange problem of progressive growth,—a case of undoubted evolution,—the traditional water-girl transformed to a perfect earth-woman. For this, she was probably driven forth from her aqueous kindred in the peopled regions of the sea.

The night hours had passed rapidly, and it was late in the morning watch when the moon stole up from her ocean hiding, and flung the light of her slim crescent upon the happy pair. Gladly they availed themselves of Cynthia's sheen to get upon their feet, and look about for something in the way of refreshment.

It was soon evident that neither liked the other to wander far away. They compromised by both eating bananas, a concession that enabled them to again assume their former place by the boulder, though

Morete now seated herself in a similar way to her companion, with her feet fairly to the front, much to the doctor's delight. Thus seated, the pair spent an hour of renewed interest in each other.

At length the tumult of mingled emotions began to weary the little sea-girl; her eyelids drooped, heavy with slumber, till she snuggled back into the arms of her captor and nestled lovingly against his breast, with the confiding girlishness of a human maiden.

Morete's new-found happiness had been so excessive and unlooked-for, that long after she seemed lost in sleep a slight quiver ran through her frame, and her ambushed glances were seen stealing out from the lifted curtains of her jetty orbs, seeking to reassure herself that her loved companion was there, and was not wholly a delusion, the momentary phantom of a dream.

When fully assured that the nervous, impassioned girl was soundly asleep, the doctor, who was very human by nature, as well as a skilled physiologist, — two strong incentives to research, — might well be forgiven for seeking to spy out by moonlight anything of a pisciform nature to be found in the aquatic creature. It was a moment of inexpressible agitation, for the sharp-eyed scientist stood upon the verge of a great discovery.

With trembling hand and beating heart Greville proceeded at once to his task. With lightest finger-touches he lifted the girl's black tresses — her only raiment — lock after lock, till every vestige of the

silky masses was removed, to fully disclose the little maiden's fish-appendages, if such there were.

Then with reverent eyes the man of science began to study the graceful curves of beauty found in the untrammelled model of nature's handiwork. There were two strong, taper limbs and normal feet, and a pelvis of unusual strength and perfection, made perhaps a trifle abnormal by excessive swimming. As a naturalist, Greville was struck dumb with the importance of his discovery; as a physiologist, he assured himself beyond doubt — by repeated inspection — that a perfect transformation had taken place, as when the tadpole becomes the frog.

Lying there with the sleeping mermaid in his arms, the doctor pondered every conceivable plan to secure her, so as to entice her willingly aboard the vessel. A less tender-hearted person would have found no difficulty in capturing that which was already in his possession. But all unwittingly Greville's heart had linked him to this little ocean waif, and nothing would induce him to resort to ungentle means to secure her for his own.

Her arched brows and voluptuous lips bespoke a trusting, docile heart and great capacity for loving; so that her sagacious companion made no doubt but that he should win her affection, and eventually she would gladly go with him to the ship. While to rudely imprison a creature so sensitive and spirited would surely cause her to pine and perish, and thus debar her captor from enticing the ocean lore which he sought.

Greville was stirred to his utmost depths while contemplating what a noble acquisition it would be to science to redeem such a special type of woman from her wild sea-life; never doubting but he should learn to interpret Morete's aquatic lingo, and thus acquire knowledge of the eerie life of other wild water-sprites in the nether ocean—rare creatures that inhabit the coral cities of the sea, whose dim, indistinct figures he had seen by moonlight in the far-down reaches of the bay; and other vast, dusky forms seen outlined against the moon-touched bottom and the coral sands, appearing like grim old sea-gods propelled about in fish-drawn chariots, whisking furtively along from grotto to grotto, ever lurking in the deep shadows, intent upon avoiding the eye of man and the light of day.

When day at length dawned and the sun crept up the previous moon-path, awaking the birds and the breeze, and tinting with rainbow hues the crests of the towering surf, Greville rubbed his sleepy eyes, eager to study the form and features of the sleeping sea-girl in the full glare of the sun. And well was the man of science repaid, for there is something very bewitching in the unconscious pose of a willow form during sleep.

Not long was Greville left to his physiological repast, for the breakers began to increase, floundering noisily on the shore till the beach trembled and the trees rocked, while the rising breeze flung the sun-gilded spray into the face of the sleeper. This

served to slightly disturb the sleeping girl, and her lips moved in audible prattling. She sighed and smiled in quick succession, and clung more closely to her loved companion, as if she were rehearsing the night's joy in her dreams.

But when the sun had climbed above the breakers and flung his hot glare upon the face of the dreaming girl, then her long silken lashes lifted sluggishly from her cheeks, till her great staring eyes flashed up into the kindly face above her. A startled, bewildered look was on her face, a visible tremor ran through her frame, and the girl shrank timidly away from her companion, for she did not quite comprehend the situation.

When it dawned upon the little maiden where she was, and what had transpired, it was beautiful to witness the hot flushes mantle her cheeks, and see the tremulous lips glow with intense emotion. She lay with her dark, questioning eyes fixed upon the doctor's gray orbs, feasting on his magnetic glances and responding with loving looks, till her breast heaved with a wild ecstasy of which she had no knowledge, and no name.

So the wondering creature lay and looked her unspeakable happiness into responsive eyes, and held the strong, magnetic man as by a spell. At length Greville unclasped the girl's arms and sprang up to accustom her to his appearance, that she might not again doubt his identity, wherever they met.

The shy creature rose and followed her companion

lovingly about, showing no wish to escape. With looks of admiration she walked about him, examined his clothes, his hands and hair, expressing some contempt at his body being housed in garments. Satisfied with her inspection, she caught his hand and led him across the strewn shells down to the verge of the breakers, making swimming motions with her hands, for him to go with her into the surf. A cold shudder ran through the man. It was the old traditional method for sea-nymphs to inveigle their lovers under the sea.

Greville shook his head, and declined with thanks. Morete arched her brows with contempt at the apparent timidity of her companion, and as if to encourage the effeminate fellow to manfully take his morning ablution, she sprang away from him and leaped under the great blue wall of foam-wreathed water and disappeared from view.

The doctor ran back to the highest part of the beach to watch for her appearance. More than ninety seconds passed before the girl showed herself outside of the three inner rollers. Shaking her wet elf-locks from her laughing face, she beckoned for the doctor to follow. He shook his head and sat watching the agile creature sporting like a frolicsome seal in the roaring surges. Presently she mounted upon the tallest of the great combers and came riding shoreward, her long hair streaming like a black banner midst the flashing foam.

Leaping to the beach, just as the great curling

crest was breaking on the shelly shore, she ran with childish glee to where the doctor sat. After stripping the water from her masses of hair she led her friend along the edge of the forest where the cocoa-nuts were plentiful. Coming to the dead palm-tree, she motioned to the doctor to go up to her chamber in the sky. But again her clumsy friend had to decline. Not at all disconcerted at the gentleman's discourtesy she led him among the palms, where young cocoa-nuts were found suitable for drinking. Selecting a tall tree that leaned away from the shore she sprang up the ridged trunk of the bowed tree, and in a few seconds twisted off a whole cluster of young nuts, laughing with the tones of a tinkling brook as the nuts fell sixty feet to the ground.

This accomplished, Morete came nimbly down with backward leaps, somewhat annoyed by her long hair, which frequently encumbered her way when the wind blew it about her agile legs in descending. Dragging the nuts to the shore, near to a sharp-pointed coral-rock, adapted to her wants, Morete seated herself beside the stone, and impaling the green husk of her nuts upon the point she soon skinned several ready for use. Catching up a pointed shell she pierced the only pervious eye, and offered the cool nectar to her companion, exclaiming, "*mai-kai i-nu*" (good drink), preparing another for herself, which she sipped with great relish.

As the very young nuts only contain milk she

broke one of the ripened fruit, provided the doctor with a spoon, improvised from a thin shell, and urged him to eat. Seeing that her guest did not eat the creamy substance with her own relish, the hospitable maiden ran into the wood for an old cocoa-nut, which, when broken, disclosed a sweet feathery puff-ball, the milk having been transformed into this delicious substance.

Again the nimble sea-girl sprang away into the forest. Returning in a few minutes she brought some crimson plantains and scarlet ohea apples, and the rarest of all tropical fruit, several lucious chirimoya. Piling them all into the doctor's lap, she crouched before him with merry eyes, and looked to see him eat.

When the morning meal was over, Morete showed her growing affection for her guest by gliding timidly into his lap, and nestling her soft olive cheek to his brown bearded face. Though the act implied trust, yet her great languishing eyes expressed surprise at her own courage in resuming her recent nesting place. Morete's growing confidence was very gratifying to the doctor, and he patted the flushed cheek of the little damsel, thinking never was human maiden more charming than this little sea-girl.

The sun was nearly an hour high, when suddenly several seamen rounded the point, uttering unearthly yells at discovering the missing doctor. Morete sprang up, greatly alarmed, trembling with terror.

The whole aspect of the girl was changed ; her nostrils were dilated, her forehead fluted, and her eyes frenzied with an insane fear. She looked to Greville with most piteous appeal to stay their coming.

The doctor tried to draw her back to him with soothing words and gentle acts, but she repelled his endearments, and motioned imperiously for him to drive away the men. It was fully evident that it would craze the timid creature to restrain her, and Greville left her free to do as she pleased.

Were it not that the girl was so thoroughly frightened, Greville would have enjoyed the spirited attitude and gestures of the beautiful creature. She stood in the act of springing away, questioning whether she should leap into the sea, or run into the forest, poised like a bird about to take wing ; or rather as the trembling deer stands, with wide eyes, dilated nostrils, and arched neck, ready to bound away at the hunter's approach, a pose which imparted additional charms to Morete's graceful form. The girl's head was thrown back till her long shining hair trailed upon the grass. Yet her wind-blown tresses did not obstruct the view of her advanced foot, her heaving chest, and strong taper limbs.

It was a good test of her affection for Greville that Morete did not fly on the instant, but it was very evident that it would madden the startled thing to restrain her. When the men first appeared, Morete exclaimed, with great show of indignation, what sounded like, "*Moko pa-pa a!*" — probably mean-

ing ship's people ; but when Greville failed to keep back the men, with the frenzied cry of, *Ao-le mai-kai!* — no good — the girl fled like a whirlwind into the forest.

Morey explained that the doctor's absence caused great anxiety on board, and the captain had given orders to go in search of him. A boat had been sent round by the southern shore, and the men worked their way round by the wreck. The boat made her appearance while the two men were talking, and Greville concluded to return to the ship by the boat, though not until he had spent half an hour in the forest calling to Morete, but without avail.

After returning to the ship Greville related his adventure in full detail to the captain, and it was agreed that every possible means should be used to coax the wild creature to the ship, and only as a last resort should harsh measures be used to capture her. The doctor suggested the plan which he was maturing to paralyze her — sufficiently to cause unconsciousness — as perhaps the best method of securing a creature so strong and fractious, and the toxic action of several available narcotics were fully discussed, and most of them had to be rejected, for want of an antidotal remedy to restore the paralyzed subject.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WRECKING FOR TREASURE.

SINCE discovering treasure in the old Spanish wreck the seamen had been kept very busy on the ship and ashore. The eleventh day's labor at the galleon had unearthed nearly a million in value of gold and silver ingots. After the strong oblong cases had been unhoused from their thick coral sheathing, they were spread out on the poop to dry, preparatory to being taken on board ship. As might be expected, the men worked with great zeal and much noise, and the wrecking was being advanced rapidly.

As many of the packages were bulky, the officers were forced to the conclusion that the run of the sharp-built Fleetwing was not capacious enough to contain more than two-thirds of the treasure, therefore some new arrangement required to be made to receive the whole. Thus the casks and provisions in the entire after-hold were broken out, and a heavy bulkhead of plank was built just beaft the booby-hatch.

The hatchway into the run also required to be enlarged, to adapt it to the larger packages. This being accomplished, and the ship's hold stowed off, she was now ready to receive her precious freight, fast as it could be brought off. To facilitate matters when unloading the boats, a strong staging was made over the side in the starboard waist, at about the level of the platform on the loaded boats. Upon this the boxes, tierces and large cases could be unloaded before hoisting on board.

These several preparations having been completed, and a strong platform perfected across two of the best boats, which were previously lashed side by side, the following day was to be given to transporting some of the treasure to the ship. A last happy thought was to stretch a whale-line from the ship's forward chain-plates to a tree on the shore, near the cavern's mouth. By this line the men on the boat-raft could haul their craft back and forth, whether loaded or light, instead of the more cumbersome way of being towed by a third boat.

On the morning of the twelfth wrecking day the crew of the raft hauled ashore by the whale-line. Then grappling the buoyed line which led to the wreck, they hauled through the underground passage, alongside of the old galleon, ready to receive freight.

The devil's den became so dark when fairly in under the coral archway that one man could not see another the length of a boat while making the passage. Its terrible associations with the devil-fish

and the death of Billy Livingston, caused the boldest seaman to shudder while passing through the cavern. But its use would save the crew a week's work, and it was much the safest way of transshipping the treasure.

The place was roomy and airy. The coral roof was arched so high above the water that even Long Tom, the tallest man on board, could stand upright on the platform while making the passage. Nevertheless, the seamen were horrified at the thought of entering the dismal den, and no argument could overcome their fears.

The gurgling noise of the slow-running water and the crackling of the coral roof, caused by the swaying trees overhead, whose roots were bedded deep down into the crevices, added greatly to the ghostliness of the cavern. When the trades were fresh, the wail of the wind was most unpleasant to hear, so like a muffled cry of human grief. This, and the groaning noises made by the surf on the seaward shore, were unearthly elements, sufficient to arouse the worst superstitions of the seamen, and never a man but came out of the devil's den paler than he went in.

For such reasons, it required considerable argument from Captain Lawrence to induce some of the most trusty men to take charge of the boat-raft while freighting the treasure through the tunnel. Hoogley, the Malay priest, and Jim, the brave Nantucket man, were the only two who yielded at

first. Crawford, Buntline and Mr. Antoine stood quaking with fear, begging not to be sent quite so near to the "durned brimstone place!"

Finally, the captain clenched his argument by telling his two old shipmates that if they refused he, himself, would lead the gang and shame his two best seamen as men were never shamed before. This settled the matter, and they yielded most ungracefully. Hoogley, Tom and 'Tucket were the captain's chosen men for this trusty position. Before the day was over other men made bold to offer their services. But none others were allowed on the treasure raft when loaded, though others of the crew were permitted to make the dread passage in, on the empty boats, when going for a load.

A warp for the stem and stern was thrown down to Hoogley and Tom, as the raft ran alongside of the "Florida." Braybrook, with a part of his gang, gave his personal attention to loading the treasure. The tackle had been guyed out fairly over the opening down through the coral, which was not much larger than the ship's main-hatch. Some of the largest and most valuable packages were hooked-to first. These were stowed along the centre of the platform, while the smaller boxes of ingots were tiered upon each side.

Care was taken to avoid weighting the boats too heavily the first trip, though the wind was light and there was no sea in the harbor. The gunwales of the boats were kept six inches above water, and the crew

were ordered to keep themselves amidships during the passage. Further precaution was taken to attach a buoy-rope and buoy to ten of the most valuable cases, so that they could be rescued if lost overboard by any accident while in transit.

When the first load was completed, ready to make the passage, Braybrook called up Tom, and himself climbed down the side of the wreck through the coral hatchway, feeling much anxiety about the success of the first trip. The mate took his position on the forward part of the platform. Hoogley was stationed aft, and 'Tucket amidships.

Word was given to let go the boat's warps. The raft moved gently away with the current, which ran about a mile and a half an hour while the trades were light, increasing to a trifle over two knots when the wind blew strong.

No effort was made to hasten the raft through the passage, it was simply guided by keeping the buoy-rope taut, lest the boats should strike on either side of the tunnel. It took about ten minutes to drift out through the cavern to the end of the buoyed rope. Then the whale-line was grappled, and the boats were warped merrily to the ship, with a song from 'Tucket and a chorus from those aboard that waked the hundred echoes of the bay.

When the first quarter-million of treasure was bowsed alongside and made secure by warps forward and aft, then a cheer went up from every soul on board, from captain to cook,—a long, loud, heart-

felt cheer, that made the parrots believe that the world had again gone mad. The ship's people swung out their tackle, and while hoisting aboard the first package of Spanish gold their songs were merry and their hands were strong.

And why should they not be merry? They had discovered wealth sufficient to enrich every man belonging to the ship, enough so that the poorest sailor-man could give up the sea. The captain stood upon the cabin-deck overlooking the proceedings. Mr. Bailey was in the waist to oversee the hoisting. His shrivelled old face was wreathed in most comical contortions, which were possibly meant for smiles, — sweet grimaces of joy, — though none but a skilled physiognomist could determine that his grimaces were not wicked menaces of murder.

When the load was all safely aboard^d, the boats were run quickly back to the wreck, and the toil of transshipping the treasure was fairly begun. The same care was taken in selecting from the heaped-up store on the poop as at first, and the raft was stowed with every precaution, buoying the best packages as before, but the charge of transporting the raft to the ship was left to the trusty three whom the captain had selected.

So the pleasant task was carried vigorously on till noon; then two hours were allowed for dinner and a noontime nap in the heat of the day. At two o'clock the wreckers resumed their work, and the freighters applied themselves with renewed zeal. When night

closed down upon them there was a million and a half dollars' worth of rich wreckage on board the Fleetwing, where it had been found but small labor to stow it away in the run.

There followed another day of like success, with no cause to deplore the carelessness of any one in handling the rich spoil. Every Spanish mark and date found on the packages were copied off by the captain and steward, and each kind of metal was stored in the hold by itself, so that it could be broken out in port in the quantity and kind required.

It would require about a week's more labor to break out the remainder of the treasure, the lower tiers were so much submerged under water, and the rock-bound packages had become so heavy to handle. The largest cases were so weighty that it was now found necessary to break away the coral crust-ing under water before they could be hooked to. This work could only be done with the head-spade, a heavy iron instrument made for cutting the large neck-bone of the right whale. The short-handled axes were of no use, and the crowbars had to be greatly lengthened out to be of service.

Tired as the seamen were after such hard days' toil, they were so elated that the old galleon had proved such an Eldorado that they nightly indulged in the merry dance and song. Now that the voyage promised to be brief, the steward was ordered to deal out some of the cabin luxuries to the crew.

They were allowed sugar for making lemonade, the fresh fruit being abundant. Though they would have preferred a more exhilarating beverage, which was tabooed, yet they succeeded in making an all-sufficient uproar as it was.

Promptly at the hour of ten the mate would order quiet among the crew, and ten minutes after a chorus of snores could be heard trumpeting from every part of the forward deck. Breakfast was usually eaten before daybreak, so that the wreckers could go to their work in the cool of the morning. To offset this, they were given the privilege of sleeping two hours during the noonday heat.

On the thirteenth morning, when taking boat for the shore, ten of the gang of twenty wreckers climbed down upon the boat-raft to boldly try the passage of the devil's den, with the mate's permission. The other ten men pulled ashore in the boat with Braybrook and Morey. Landing on the beach, they followed the path through the woods and reached the wreck before the other men left the ship.

When the men on the raft were at length ready to proceed, one and all grappled to the tow rope, and by their united force ran the boats quickly to the cavern's mouth, making a noisy chorus that set the parrots shrieking with terrific din. At the entrance to the tunnel the merry fellows seized upon the buoyed rope, eager to haul the raft briskly through the dismal passage and alongside the wreck, where their shipmates awaited them.

Braybrook and Morey stood leaning over the coral-covered side of the wreck, leisurely smoking their pipes, and watching for the raft to make its appearance in the opening through the coral. The mate saw the guide-rope shake, and grow taut, when the crew seized it and pulled lustily upon it. He heard the merry shouts of the noisy fellows fast approaching the wreck, and a man was ordered to stand ready to throw the warp when the boats came under the coral-hatchway.

Then came a sudden crash, as if the raft had been run into the side of the coral cavern. The guide-rope slackened, and was pulled upon no more. The cries of the alarmed men came piercing up the opening, followed by the hideous screech of the sea-beast, and its hundred prolonged echoes, which told the whole story in a twinkling. The devil-fish was in his lair, and the men were being devoured by the monster.

The noise of splintering planks now reached the mate, and the grating sound of the boats being ground against the coral mingled with the continuous snake-like hissing of the enraged demon. This, with the occasional groans of their shipmates, and the gurgling sound of drowning men, were horrors that made the mates' hair stand on end.

For a few minutes neither officer knew how to lend a helping hand. Leaving Morey to watch the hole in the coral, with a rope ready to throw down to any one calling for assistance, Braybrook called

off all the other men to follow him through the woods to the bay-shore.

It seems that when the boat-raft was midway of the dark passage, the bows suddenly crashed into something while at full speed, sending the forward platform leaping up to the coral roofing, while the men forward were knocked down and stunned by the blow from above, and the larger part of the crew were tipped off from the stern of the platform and left swimming in the water.

As yet no one could conceive what the boats had grounded upon. Presently the boats slipped back from the obstruction with a grating sound and drifted astern with the current. Then the raft was seized by the huge mandible of the devil-fish, and the shriek of their old enemy filled the cavern with audible terror, leaving them in doubt no longer.

The savage beast shook the raft from side to side as a dog shakes his game, cracking and splintering the planks in his rage and hissing like a snake. The stunned men were rolled overboard into the arms of the fierce creature, at the risk of being grappled by his horny claws; though he was wrestling at too close quarters with the raft to make good use of his tentacles, which were elbowing roughly against the bottom of the boats.

When the mate and his gang reached the shore, they manned the boat, shoved off and pulled lustily for the mouth of the cavern. As the boat rounded the sand-spit and headed for the tunnel, six men

from the raft were met swimming out of the cave, apparently unharmed, but looking aghast with terror.

The men briefly reported that the boats had run blundering into the arms of the devil-fish, and they believed that the rest of their shipmates had been seized and killed. Braybrook bade them go ashore and wait for his return, and the boat continued on, pulling close up to the tunnel, ready to render assistance to others if any were alive.

While holding the boat head to the current,—alert to spring away if the monster appeared,—presently old Tom and 'Tucket came slowly drifting out of the den, face downward, as if dead. Crawford's head was bruised and bleeding, as if he had been clawed by the beast. The waterlogged men were hauled into the boat, and inclined head down to free the lungs of water. The boat was pulled quickly to the ship where the drowned men could have better attention and the doctor's assistance.

While this was going on the masthead lookout called out that another man was floating out of the cavern. Braybrook pulled hurriedly back and found that the apparently dead man was Pico. This accounted for all but one of the missing men. Just who the lost one was the crew could not tell. Pico was taken to the ship, though with no hope of his recovery, and the boat again returned to the devil's den.

After watching half an hour and seeing nothing but splintered pieces of the raft come from the

passage, Braybrook pulled to the shore and took the six men and Mr. Morey to the ship. The three half-drowned men were rallying and at length were saved, though all were badly bruised on the head by being thumped against the coral roof. When the roll was called it was found that English Bill was the missing man; he was one of the men on the forward platform with Tom.

As it was feared that the devil-fish would attack the ship when he got tired of splintering the boats, the hatches were closed, barred, and the tarpaulins put on. The spades were placed handy for use, the six-pounder was loaded with canister and hauled into the waist, where, with the gangway out, a shot could be got at the beast if he approached as usual on the starboard side.

As the decapod did not attack the ship it was determined that the best and safest policy would be to assail him. And it was thought best to begin at once, while sure he was at home, as no more freighting could be done until the brute was disposed of.

Putnam's plan of attacking the wolf in his den, was deemed the best method in the present case. Lower a keg of powder into the devil's den, give it time to drift down upon the enemy, and explode it; this would give the desired result.

All hands were called, and it was determined to act at once. Two kegs of cannon powder were emptied into a small, slim cask, which was strongly becketed. To this was secured a hundred feet of

tow-rope, by which to drift the cask down upon the enemy.

Twenty feet of tubing, having a half inch hole, was carefully filled with good gunpowder, made slightly damp to act as a time-fuse, and inserted into the end of the cask among the dry powder. The powder-cask was then lowered into the mate's boat and taken to the beach, where it was slung upon two poles, and carried by four men to the wreck.

Mr. Morey followed with the waist boat, taking five plank, seach ten feet long, becketed at the ends, so that the whole five could be linked together, and follow the cask as a float. The planks were to bear up the time-fuse and thirty feet of slow-match, formed of dry tow, which would connect the powder-tube with the wreck.

It was short work to transport these simple implements of destruction from the shore to the wreck. When all were ready, the powder-cask was hoisted over the side, and after the first plank was secured to it, and the powder-tube adjusted, it was lowered down through the coral hatchway to the water, and held in tow by its warps.

When the cask and first plank were fairly afloat in the subterranean passage, another plank was attached, to which the remainder of the tube was secured, together with the beginning of the slow-match. So one after another of the five planks was tailed on, all containing the slow-match; and the powder-cask was slacked away fifty feet down the dark passage, without disturbing the devil-fish.

Bidding the crew retreat to the weather shore, Braybrook lighted the tow, and watched to see the slow-match burn, till the flame disappeared down the devil's den, through which there was a strong draft. Then the mate followed the men to a safe distance, exulting over the thought that the Fleetwing's people would soon be revenged, if their plan prospered.

Ten minutes passed, and all agreed that their mine was a failure. Just why the fuse failed to explode the powder, remained to be seen. All started back to the wreck to pull up the train, plank after plank, to learn where the trouble was. There was a general feeling that the flaming tow had attracted the devil-fish, and he had pounced upon the cask, and in some way disconnected it from the fuse.

Braybrook, who was in advance, had just stepped down upon the wreck, and Morey was about to follow him, when the long-delayed explosion took place. The concussion knocked down the mate, and tumbled Morey back among the men. Trees, cocoa-nuts, broken coral, and a cloud of dirt leaped into the air with a muffled roar, sounding much like a distant growl of thunder, followed by a more stunning reverberation.

Coral and cocoa-nuts fell thickly about the seamen, but none were seriously injured. When the vast mass of debris had fallen, the mate sprang up and ran to the opposite side of the wreck to see the effect. A hundred feet of the top of the cavern was blown off, but nothing could be seen of the raft or

the devil-fish. The foremast and the crosstrees of the wreck were left standing, free and clear of the encumbering foliage that had hidden it from view.

Braybrook led the way to the bay-shore, followed by the men. As the officers emerged from the woods the shattered remains of the raft were seen drifting out into the bay. One boat was afloat, while the other was torn to tatters. Floating in the water, near the mouth of the den, were great squirming masses of the torn monster, drifting helplessly in the current.

Upon the near shore the mate and the men were confronted by an appalling sight that made their blood run cold. Crawling languidly up on the sand-spit before them were the five right-hand tentacles of the hideous sea-beast, tugging lustily to drag after them some thirty feet of the bloated body, which was still attached to these mighty members. The officers watched to see the snakish limbs complete their task. Then the tentacles stretched out upon the hot sand at full length, radiating from a common centre, like five points of a compass, leaving the torn segment of the body to squirm about in the water.

There was but little damage done to any of these five vast tentacles, though the fifth presented a strange, barrel-shaped appearance that held the attention. While the base of either of the four forward limbs was not larger than the mainmast, the hindmost one, for at least twenty feet, was as

large as a five barrel cask, and it soon after disclosed the most singular phenomenon known to naturalists.

While the mates stood watching the painful contortions of these gigantic limbs, first stretching to their utmost and tearing up the sand with their countless horny claws, and then contracting into snake-like convolutions, as if about to spring upon the men before them, their attention was drawn to the lively internal movement of something within the swollen part of the fifth tentacle.

It certainly appeared as if some live creature was moving about from end to end in the enlarged part of the limb. The cause of this was soon to be disclosed. Suddenly five nimble young devil-fish came crawling out of a rent, or a natural orifice, near the body, and scrambled off into the water like a nest of eels.

So their turbulent enemy was a female decapod; an approximate mother, full of the maternal instinct to defend her lair, as a bird battles for its nest, or a mother-whale loses her life willingly to protect her young. The aperture, which was taken for a perforated place in the limb, proved to be the natural fetal outlet of the young-bearing parts. Whether the left side of the sea-beast was of similar construction could not be ascertained, for the tentacles of that side were torn to tatters by the explosion.

Dr. Greville subsequently took the actual measurement of the five tentacles as they lay stretched on the shore. The four side ones were found to

measure a trifle more than fifty feet. They had two rows of denticulated suckers, disk shaped, of from six to eight inches in diameter, having numerous claws rimmed about each of the larger ones. The ends of these four tentacles were supplied with twenty hooked claws — ten on a side.

The forward and larger tentacle measured sixty-one feet, and its extremity was armed with a double row of horny claws along one-third of its length. This gigantic arm was more supple and prehensile than the others, and was gifted with much greater power of extension and contraction than its fellows.

The vast beak or mandible was found elsewhere and taken on board. It measured ten and a half feet and was thick as a topmast; it was shaped like a parrot's bill. The edges of the upper mandible were denticulated like saw teeth, of a horny substance like cows' horn. It could bite a yard-arm off — as we have seen. The throat was large enough to swallow a man easily. The stomach, inwards, and its large water-tube — one of its means of propulsion — were so shattered by the explosion that they could not be analyzed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOLVING THE MYSTERY.

THOUGH the Fleetwing's people had of late found matters of much greater interest than the Fire Cross to talk about, they had not forgotten their fright about it, or ceased to conjecture what the nature of its mystery could be. But since the explosion cleared away the foliage that had hidden the foremast of the old galleon, the whole secret of the weird light was disclosed.

When the vessel was wrecked, her main and mizzen masts were carried away by the board — broken short off at the deck — while, strange to say, the foremast remained intact to the very head of the lower mast; the fore-topmast breaking at the cap, left the heel of the mast held fast to the crosstrees by its fid. Ships did not have tops in those long-gone days, so it was the mast and crosstrees which gave shape to the Fire Cross.

The lower mast and all its top hamper aloft were heavily coated with fine coral sand; growing upon this stony crust of coral was found a prolific growth

of vegetable fungoid, the *Agaricus muscarius*, bright with crimson and gold pileus. Mingled here and there with this rare fungus, over both mast and crosstrees, were a few other more common varieties of purple, orange and green, all of which had contributed to the previous displays of brilliant fire-works that had so aroused the curiosity of the crew.

The luminous quality of the Fly Agaric found upon the Florida's cross-trees is the most marvellous of all the mycologic flora. Many of the more common fungi are edible and quite palatable to those accustomed to eating them. Among the edible fungoids found in northern autumnal forests are the Bolete, blazing with crimson and orange, the delicate Peziza, with its golden cups richly tinted in velvety browns, and the *Agaricus lacatus*, blooming with soft amethystine colors.

Not so with the pungent and poisonous Fly Agaric, which is a powerful narcotic used in many countries for medical and stimulative purposes. When indicated for disease, the action of this fungoid is positive and specific. Its remedial limits are the nervous disorders, whether acute or chronic, where the lesion, or seat of disease, is located upon the anterior spinal nerves, in the form of anæmia, or spinal irritation.

The author is indebted to the venerable Dr. Medelino of Brazil for much rare and curious knowledge of the medical action of this *Agaricus* upon epileptic conditions, all chorea-like twitchings and contor-

tions and its associate paralysis, together with the long-lasting vertigo arising from brain-fag, and the usual spinal sensitiveness to cold air, which accompany it. Medelino also teaches that all diseases cured by Fly Agaric are greatly aggravated during the full and change of the moon, especially in females, and more particularly when the moon's perigee coincides with the above lunar phases.

We are also greatly beholden to the sagacious medico-priests of Hindostan for some singular uses made of this fungoid in their country. It is a most active aphrodisiac, used like hashish in India and opium among the Celestials. Although an active poison its toxic effect passes away after a prolonged natural sleep, or by frequent urination.

The Agaricus is used in many remote countries as an intoxicant. The method of its use when taken for convivial purposes at a bacchanal is strange and novel. A young, healthy person is induced to eat heartily of this fungoid, which soon produces great exhilaration, acts vigorously upon the renal organs and makes the young Bacchalian drunk as a fiddler. While in this much-desired condition, the copious urinary secretion of the youthful inebriate is solicited and drank with avidity by his companions as a delicious intoxicant.

Place this nephritic beverage under a microscope, and, most strange to say, it is found full of infinitesimal fungi, growths which have propagated in the blood in an hour's time. From this well-authenti-

cated fact physicians may obtain valuable data, and thus learn the manner in which many diseases are propagated from one deleterious breath, or a single particle floating in the air during contagious diseases.

A boson's chair was rigged at the wreck for the purpose of hoisting Dr. Greville up to the cross-trees to make observations while the strange phosphorescent light of the Fire Cross was at its greatest brilliance, and the result was very satisfactory. When examined at night, during the height of electric flood, while the several fungi were the most luminous, the stamens of all were found erect and odorous, developing from bud to bloom.

Thus the strongest light was emitted while the fungoids were growing most vigorously, and the lumination waned and expired when the plants drooped and wilted. Further examination with the microscope showed that the substance which emitted light — whatever its color or degree of luminosity — was similar to animal phosphorescence. Clusters of the principal fungoid were taken from the crosstrees when the light was most brilliant, carried aboard, and suspended in the fore-castle and cabin. While it remained fresh it emitted a dull phosphorescing light, something like St. Elmo's fire, when perched upon the yard-arms and at the mast-heads.

It soon withered in the stifled air below deck, and then the light dimmed and went out. When prompted by the doctor, the officers all noticed that its presence in the cabin was very exhilarating at

first. This was followed by a powerful reaction; for after a few hours' test, one and all discovered that they were becoming greatly depressed from inhaling its rank odor. The renal secretion was greatly increased, and as odorous as when one has eaten asparagus, or drank lobelia tea.

It was this simple, eccentric freak of nature that had so greatly terrified the Fleetwing's crew. It had aroused their worst superstitions, and they were almost mutinous, until all wished to solve the unaccountable mystery. The light of the Fire Cross when it was first observed seemed to be at the water's edge; approach it, and it would rise up and disappear. On the nights when it shone the brightest it often appeared to gradually approach the ship. Launch a boat and pull ashore, and the light faded before your eyes, as little by little it became hidden by the intervening foliage.

Now that the Fire Cross had been unriddled, and the ugly sea-beast destroyed, the themes of treasure-hunting, and the wonderful water-girl became the nightly topics fore-and-aft the ship. Marvellous were the mermaid stories told by Uncle Joe and some of the white-haired seamen, yet no one on board had ever seen a sea-girl but had the fish terminal, so that little Morete took the palm, as being the most wonderful of the species.

In spite of the whirl of excitement about killing the devil-fish during the past few days, Greville had been to the Weather Point several times without

seeing the mermaid. She always became so shocked by her successive frights that she usually kept secluded for days after. Probably the uproar made by the explosion had frightened her more than all else. But when the doctor returned the third night after a futile search, the captain reported having caught a glimpse of her near Bird's Nest, but he did not think best to permit any one, other than the doctor, to approach her.

On the following day, after the gang of wreckers had got quietly at work, Greville sculled himself in among the *motus* along the shore. Not seeing anything to attract his attention about Bird's Nest, he paddled his boat quietly along the beach, and landed at the orange grove abreast of the Lullaby. After long watching, the persistent man began to fear that he should not accomplish his desire to secure the sea-girl, as the ship would soon be compelled to sail away from her island home.

Tired of watching through the sultry hours, it occurred to him to go into the forest, and call the pet name, which she loved so well. Trying a few calls among the *motus*, before he went into the woods, Morete suddenly emerged out from under Lullaby Isle, much to his surprise. Staring timidly about, as she shook the wet hair from her face, she cried out with gladness at seeing the doctor, "*Auwe aikane!*" and swam leaping through the intervening water like a frolicsome porpoise. Bounding over the coral beach, she seized the extended hands of

her loved companion, who rose to greet her with winning smiles and gentle words of welcome, though neither could understand a word which the other said.

Just then a wild outcry came from the wreckers, caused by some new discovery which they had dragged to the light of day. This so startled the little mermaid that she seized Greville's hand and drew him hurriedly away into the forest, trembling with apprehension of evil. They soon came to a pretty nook in the wild wood, sufficiently secluded to dispel Morete's morbid sense of danger. The pallor soon passed from her terrified face, and the look of anguish slowly faded from her staring eyes. When a full sense of security finally possessed her, a flush of girlish gladness mantled her brown cheeks, and she drew her companion down upon the matted leaves and nestled confidently to his side.

The forest seclusion which Morete had chosen was cool and grateful in the strong heat of the day. Though the torrid sun hung like a ball of fire over the balsamic woods and the land-locked bay, little could his fierce beams penetrate where the doctor sat, for the few finger-points of palpitating fire seen here and there were barely sufficient to dispel the sylvan gloom. About these little gleams of vivid sunlight there congregated the singing lizards and chirping crickets, flashing their shining armor of green and gold like mimic lightning in the dusky covert.

During this noontide heat the woods were as silent as at midnight; hushed were the thousand bird-songs and the hideous screeching of the parrot tribes; even the merry trades had ceased to sing in the tree-tops, they had lost their strength of wing, and now dropped into slumber. And it were not strange that the all-pervading hush at length stole into the hearts of the nestling pair, till they clung to each other in the voiceless ecstasy of lovers, — so awed by the spirit-presence of the place.

Who can describe the aromatic odors of a tropical forest at such an hour, with its oozing gums and spicy barks, its fragrant fruits and sweet-scented flowers — palatable accessories to ravish the soul with their delicious perfumes and balsamic exudations, all unknown to other lands? Where they sat the tinted leaves outnumbered the rainbow in colors, while the gorgeous tints of the flowers were more brilliant than the gaudy hues of the birds, which they seemed to pattern from.

The time and place were most favorable for Greville to win a measure of yet greater trust and confidence from Morete. She had been so disturbed by the boisterous outcries of the wreckers that she was now less animated than usual. Not much did she care to prattle her sweet jangle of sounds as at their last meeting. She had learned then that her loved friend had not control over his rude shipmates, enough to keep them from intruding upon her privacy, and from casting lassoes over her head. This

was an element of disadvantage which would be hard for Greville to overcome, especially if the girl remembered his effeminacy in not daring to climb a tree, or plunge with her into the breakers.

Morete sat with the doctor's idle hand held fast between her two tiny palms, gazing earnestly into his eyes, endeavoring to read his thoughts; intent as a naturalist would study a bird or flower. Delicious reading were Morete's own questioning eyes and emotional face, as she knew no art of hiding love's bewitching thrills and unruly heart-beats. Though untamed and untutored as a fish in the sea, the girl responded to an intelligent look or a fondling touch as quickly as a human maiden.

Let the doctor but speak a word of endearment, or look with tenderness upon her, — and there were times when the man's heart was in his eyes, — and the girl would tremble with delight and soften almost to tears. What a world of expression would leap into her great languishing eyes as she watched the loved face; eyes dark and soft and dreamy, rather than lustrous, opaque and piercing, the general characteristic of black eyes. When most at rest there was a tender, pensive, inner light in Morete's eyes, like that seen in expressive human eyes when in spiritual communion with heavenly things. But could this elfin sea-girl be gifted with a soul, other than such a soul as lies hidden in the core of all things, the vital spark in the drop of water, the breath of air, or the soul exhaled by the perfumed flower?

But there was another and more frequent expression which failed not to sadden the heart of the beholder, and made Greville murmur a silent prayer, asking God to temper the evils of life to this shorn lamb. This look of deep, inward sorrow came over the girl at the slightest disturbance; the restive rustling of the palm fronds would arouse it; the noisy shouts of the ship's people, or the deep sougling of the distant breakers, brought that look of anguish to her face—a measure of mental unrest wild enough to be mania. Such a condition of mind as compels a human soul to cry aloud to the Father for aid.

What could this mystery be, to thus haunt and horrify the little sea-girl? It was a grief sufficient to drive her from the home-places under the sea and the companionship of her species. The strange phenomenon of such a morbid mental condition in a mermaid greatly engrossed Greville's attention when they were together.

After the noonday heat had abated, Greville led the way back to the shore to induce Morete to take a seat in his boat. This she readily did, but the instant the boat was floated from the shore she leaped into the water. Again he brought the boat to the beach and she gladly clambered into a seat beside the doctor, exclaiming lovingly, "*Maikai oe!*" (good you).

At length the doctor made one more trial before returning to the ship. It was a venture which he

never tried again, as it created a distrust in the girl's mind that threatened to retrograde all his past labor. While Morete sat lovingly by his side, showing the liveliest enjoyment at keeping him yet a little longer, he folded one arm closely about her with the view to detain her against her wishes. So far, this did not displease her in the least. But when with the other hand he seized a paddle and thrust the boat from shore, the girl struggled desperately for freedom. Finding herself held captive, a most distressing look came into her face and she fought like an imprisoned seal.

Not deeming it prudent to retain her under such circumstances, Greville loosed his hold just as the boat was passing Lullaby. With a look of terror Morete plunged into the water and disappeared under the *motu*, leaving behind a tapering white swirl in the clear water leading down to the coral grottoes beneath. The gleaming sea-stars flashed back the declining sunlight like palpitating opals, but the maiden, Morete, was seen no more for the day.

Thus, day after day, Greville devoted his time to winning the love of the little water-maid, against the coming day of her capture, and imprisonment on board the Fleetwing. They spent much of their time in the orange grove on the border of the bay, or under the swaying palm-trees on the Point, for of all her pastimes Morete loved best to disport in the gigantic surf on the windward shore.



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Morete taught the doctor her own devious path from the bay-shore to the sea, and when she could not be found among the *motus*, he would plunge into the forest and toil through the dim cathedral gloom to the Weather Point. There the little sea-girl would be found playing with the fishes,—her only aquatic companions,—swimming in the breakers, or asleep in her lofty eerie on the dead palm. If she was feeding the fishes she would not leave till her pleasant task was completed, but she would call her loved friend to her side, and when he tarried on the verge of the shore and could not be persuaded to sit with her in the water, she showed her pique in a very human-like way, by making him wait her pleasure.

Wherever else the little sea-girl was found she would always come quickly at the doctor's call, for his companionship daily grew more welcome to the aquatic creature. The last afternoon they spent upon the Point, two days before sailing, was one of unalloyed pleasure to Morete; never had she been in such a pleasant mood, or more given to tender, affectionate endearments.

Though the day was fearfully hot in the harbor, a cool and grateful breeze pervaded the Point. Morete was found lying in the shade, near down upon the shore, where the invisible spray blew from the crest of the surf and kissed her hot cheeks, as she sipped the honeyed water from a cocoa-nut—one of a cluster she had just wrung from an adjacent

tree. She sprang up and greeted her visitor with unusual ardor, making a brave attempt to kiss her loved companion to his heart's content, proving that the delicious art of osculation can be attained even by an aquatic maiden.

It was a most romantic spot which Morete had chosen for her seaside home. Her choice had been greatly influenced by the stupendous surf, which here rolled in with unusual force upon the shell-strewn shore. Above them swayed the bannered palms, clattering their ever-refreshing nuts in the wind, and whispering soothing lullabies to lovers' ears.

About them on the forest side every bough was festooned with clambering vines, the mimosa and gardenia growing everywhere. Most notable of all was the yellow jasmine, which climbed to the top of the highest trees ; twining its clinging tendrils among the topmost boughs, it leaped skyward, eager as a lark at morn. Failing to find aerial support in the sky, the aspiring vine reluctantly drooped earthward again, swaying its odorous stars of gold in the brisk trades, like the incense torches of a bridal train.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CAPTURING THE MERMAID.

AT length the long-wished-for day of sailing was at hand. The rich hoard of Spanish treasure had been transported to the ship, and safely stowed in the hold. The day had been spent in bending a new suit of sails to the freshly-painted yards, and newly-tarred stays. The nimble sailors were reeving new running rigging fore-and-aft, from the pliant whale-line, which would be used for such purpose no more.

Numerous boat-loads of the various fruits were to be gathered and slung to the stays and backstays. Nets of oranges, lemons and limes had yet to be brought off and suspended beneath the tops and over the stern. Other half-dozen boat-loads of dry cocoa-nuts were required to fatten the pigs and poultry during the long homeward voyage; these were tumbled into the hold to make the best stowage they could among the casks.

During the evening's talk with the doctor Captain Lawrence had announced that the mermaid must

now be got on board, if ever, for he could not give but one day more for the purpose. For as their stay drew near to a close, home-scenes and home-friends naturally became the topic, and the captain began to anticipate the warm greetings which awaited him ; especially from the adorable little Nellie, who was gradually assuming a strong foothold in his heart, to the exclusion of all others.

As we have seen in the last chapter, Greville had frequently managed to decoy the little mermaid into his boat, but could never induce her to abide a minute after the boat was set afloat, as the pretty creature had an insane horror of approaching the ship, where she had been treated so rudely. Thus other means of more or less severity must now be resorted to, if the Fleetwing was to capture and take away the elfish sea-girl.

The doctor had occupied himself in the past week preparing a powerful narcotic by which to paralyze the mermaid, when the final time came to capture her. He had previously given much time and research in learning the least dangerous methods of producing complete unconsciousness ; for the anaesthetics of the present day were not then much known. Homer had sung of the uses of nepenthe, and Hoa-Tho, the great Chinese physician of the third century, had taught the value of Indian hemp, to produce partial insensibility.

But nothing of that kind would answer in Morete's case ; and after many interesting experiments the

doctor had concluded to try a preparation made from the yellow jasmine, *Gelsemium Sempervirens*, which was found to have eight special centres of paralytic action.

The jasmine is an eccentric poison, and produces two quite opposite toxic conditions before it completes the required lethal state, which is a third and secondary affection. It is both a tetanoid and a paralyzent; but paralysis of the spinal cord always precedes the tetanus, and the voluntary fibres of motor nerves are first involved, followed by the strangely opposite affection of spasms in the various muscles of the body and organs. Lastly, it attacks the involuntary, or automatic nervous action, and causes death.

The remedy is made by tincturing a handful of the fresh young roots of the jasmine in double its weight of strong alcohol. Macerate this saturate for a week, and it makes the best concentrated tincture of Gelsemia. When properly made, with roots full of sap, the tincture is a clear dark red, showing a sparkling bronze color to the vertical eye; and it yields the physician a remedy of most marvellous medicinal action, having no rival in whatever direction it acts.

When possessed of the required remedy, Greville diligently sought to acquaint himself with its toxic power and methods of action, which are always a most fascinating research for a man of science; for the pathogenesis—the disease-making power—of

• a subtle poison is as interesting to the student of drugs as are the characteristics of a renowned person.

Next, the daring physician had endeavored to learn some of its antidotes — if such there were — by which to abate its poisonous effects upon the human subject. This knowledge could only be acquired by testing the poison upon himself and others.

He began with small doses, frequently repeated, and sometimes long continued. And in several instances he had ventured so far into the unknown domain as to produce paralysis of some one or more members of the body ; though he always retained full consciousness through it all. This success would induce him to try yet larger doses in his next attempt.

In this dilemma, Captain Lawrence was called to administer some of their previously supposed antidotal remedies. By this assiduous and oft repeated use of the remedy, it was found that strong coffee, or a tea made of red pepper, would gradually overcome the paralytic condition ; and further experiments showed that galvanism or electricity had the most desirable effect in restoring the normal condition.

Thus equipped, the careful physician knew beforehand the exact method in which his poison would take effect. And he could not only follow the paralytic action from nerve to nerve, and ganglia to

ganglia, with great precision, but he had also made the most scrupulous calculations just how near to the death-line he could approach, and not overstep the bound of possible resuscitation.

Most narcotic poisons are too dangerous to be tampered with in this manner. Their border-line is too slippery ground to venture upon. Their exact line of demarkation, between "To be, or not to be?" cannot be approached with impunity, by even the most skilful.

After having experimented largely upon himself, and in some measure upon the captain and cabin boy, for even they found great fascination in watching the many innocent effects of the remedy—Greville practised upon a small pig, three kittens, and a young seal, which were given up to his tender mercies. Its action upon these lower animals was a startling revelation, which almost made the terrified man abandon his scheme; for it quickly killed them all by asphyxia.

Both Greville and the captain had previously agreed that Gelsemia first spent its force upon man by paralyzing the motor nerves, doing this in an easy, gradual manner that was harmless, with the proper antidote at hand; for, so far, it had not greatly implicated the heart or lungs, or depressed the circulation of the blood; while the nerves of sensibility did not become affected till the very last, when the death-line was closely approximated.

The first and most marked toxical effect upon man

is on the eyes. Vertigo is soon followed by staggering. Then comes dimness of sight, and double vision. The diplopia is succeeded by ptosis, or paralysis of the upper lids; then the eyeballs begin to oscillate from side to side, and partial loss of sight slowly supervenes, showing that the spinal cord has at length become involved.

Why then should the poison act so differently upon lower animals? It quickly suspended respiration, and stopped heart action, until they died from asphyxia; even before the central motor nerves were in the least affected. The pupils of the animals were contracted to a pin's point, and did not dilate — as in man — until the animals were stricken with death.

This discovery had a most depressing effect upon Dr. Greville. For if mermaids were to be ranked among lower animals, he could not hope to produce anæsthesia upon Morete, short of the moribund state; and he had not yet found an antidote that would resuscitate the animals when in that condition.

After passing a sleepless night, the doctor presented himself at breakfast with a truly haggard appearance. But for the captain's raillery, and his own disinclination to make known the affection he bore the little sea-girl, he would have made no further move to capture the mermaid.

As it was Morete's day to be in the harbor, Greville reluctantly paddled his boat in to the beach,

though it was not Morete's custom to leave the Weather Point till later in the day. Not finding her in the orange grove, the doctor paddled alongside the fallen trunk which comprised Lullaby Isle, seeking some flowers from a rare rose-tree growing on the floating isle. He had often been deterred from making this exploration in fear of the brambles and impassable vines that hampered the place.

Walking along the prostrate trunk of the fallen tree, he forced himself with difficulty through the tangled undergrowth, till he reached the coveted roses with torn clothes and scratched hands. He was amazed to discover a cleared place in the centre of the *motu*, arched over by the climbing rose-tree, and embowered with mimosa and jasmine vines, which had thickly interlaced the topmost foliage of the sea-tossed isle.

Heart-sick as he was, Greville was delighted to have thus stumbled upon the sanctuary of his little sea-goddess. It was a sylvan temple of exquisite beauty, with a flooring thick-strewn with dried flowers. The place was made densely fragrant by a mingled odor of roses and the large yellow jasmines, together with the flavor of ripe custard apples, and other palatable hoards upon the fruit-bearing shrubs. Both flowers and fruit were more numerous and rare than upon any other *motu*, probably growing from seeds which Morete had brought there in past years.

The entrance of this charming bower was a hole up through the centre from beneath, so small that it

came near being overlooked. This water-hatch gave place to a cool draught up through the flooring from the shaded space below. This cunningly contrived place accounted for Morete's diving so frequently under the *motu*, when the Fleetwing's people supposed she had descended to some coral cave in the bay. And it was here that the captain had so often seen her girlish face peering out from among the trailing vines which fringe the *motu* along the water-front.

Greville spent several hours in the pretty haunt of his darling, brooding over the unpleasant scheme which he had contemplated. At length he arose and was about to return by the way he came, when his attention was attracted by a little splash under the *motu*, and up bobbed the head of Morete.

The face of the little sea-girl wore a puzzled look, never to be forgotten. A mixed expression of joy and alarm, such as might well be expected when a timid maiden finds a gentleman caller in her boudoir unannounced. The frightened look gave place to a transport of delight, and Morete sprang up through the inlet with an outburst of joy. And never was Greville so glad to see her. She threw her arms about his neck without waiting to wring the water from her hair, and it was long before the happy creature could abate her delight.

While the blushing girl was busy drying her hair, and oiling it with the fragrant *manoe* nut, she chatted with her lover like a magpie, so curious was she as

to how he came there. She evidently questioned him to know if he came in through her entrance, or over the top of the shrubbery, not deeming it possible to penetrate the thick barricade of briars.

The pretty minx seemed very proud of her first gentleman visitor, and when her hair was dressed, she assumed many of the pretty airs of a young housekeeper. She adroitly tidied up the drooping vines, where the doctor had carelessly culled her flowers; picked up the thorns and broken stems which thoughtless men strew about the house, and ended by smoothing down the strewn roses and hibiscus blossoms upon her tessellated floor.

Greville could not but admire the willowy form and physical beauty of his little Morete as she stood there before him in her bower of roses. Her face at that moment was made all the more bewitching by the added charm of enamored girlhood. Her lips were apart, showing her small white teeth, as she smiled in sweet abandon upon her loved companion. Never had the doctor seen the girl appear so winsome, standing there with her bosom heaving with pent-up emotions, which she could not repress, and the love of the tender-hearted man went forth to her as never before.

But when he dwelt upon the horrible task before him, he cowered and grew pale at the thought of the fell deed. So great was his agitation while pondering the subject, that he could not but disclose his guilt to the victim. The eyes of the intuitive

girl detected the first shade of sadness that flitted over the face of her lover. Claspings his hand in her own tiny palms, she plied him with looks of love and girlish endearments; pressing his cold hand to her hot cheeks, and holding it fast to her throbbing heart, she sat before him with swimming eyes, watching to learn the source of his sudden sorrow.

An hour of cowardly irresolution thus passed, and Greville could not determine whether to abandon or undertake the tragic task. At length he made a move to go, intent upon escaping the searching glances of the innocent young creature by his side, lest with her keen intuition she should detect the premeditated crime against her liberty, perhaps her life. Standing with her hands upon his shoulders, Morete gazed up into her lover's face with piteous appeals to deter his going. Her large, soft eyes were beaming with unutterable love, which her tongue could not utter.

Guilt is a base thing, and will not down at the bidding. As Greville could not control himself enough to enact the murderous scene, he put the clinging arms of the loved young creature tenderly from about him, and forced his way through the tangled undergrowth in spite of thorns and briars. He left Morete grieving in her sylvan bower, and the harassed man was glad to shut out her lustrous eyes, which had so belittled him with their pity, making his fell purpose burn like a hot iron in his soul.

He thought to leave the aggrieved girl in her nesting place while he sought the forest gloom, hoping to subdue the kindred darkness in his soul. But he was not versed in maiden-love to suppose that the ardent child of the sea would remain behind because he bade her. Greville sprang into his boat, loosed the warp from the fallen trunk, seized the paddle, and while propelling his craft to the shore, saw Morete come leaping up to the surface from under the *motu*,—as a bird with folded wings drops down from the sky. Placing her dimpled hand on the gunwale, she swam by the side of the retreating boat till it reached the beach.

When the doctor stepped ashore, Morete ran to him and caught his hand, her face radiant with joy to think that he would tarry yet a while beneath her fostering care. A few hours' rambling in the sombre forest, during the midday heat, served to fortify and nerve the doctor sufficiently to undertake his many-sided deed of peril. The poor sophist falsely flattered himself with the fallacious argument that he was about to do an apparent wrong for the great good which would come from his cruel act.

Together the two finally wandered back to the boat. It was mid-afternoon, and two of the ship's boats had just shoved out from the shore deeply loaded with hand-picked oranges from the grove near Lullaby. Seating themselves in the stern-sheets, with the keel just grounded on the beach, an unbent boat-sail to recline upon, and an awning

overhead to prevent fatal congestion from the fiery heat of the sun, the time for the perfidious act had come.

Greville made his final preparations with the coolness of an old-time headsman—like one who feels the dagger's point before he strikes the fatal blow. The face of this man of science was now bland and smiling, his voice soft and soothing; for he had again become enthralled with the strange fascination of testing a deadly poison, whether upon one's self or another. He toyed playfully with his victim to wholly dispossess her mind of any lingering thought of evil; for mental depression is a poison in itself, and would certainly insure a fatal result in the present case.

Greville had previously paved the way for this event, at their several last meetings, by feeding the girl freely with common brown sugar, to which he would gradually add a touch of bitter to accustom her to the jasmine taste. The poisoned confection was made to simulate the other sugars in appearance; but while its fragrance is most grateful to all, its aromatic bitterness is most unpalatable to many.

Placing a pretty box, filled with the subtle poison, in Morete's lap,—which, like many another evil, bore no look of guile,—the doctor began the tragic act, which was to paralyze and stupefy the girl, by taking a pinch of the prepared sugar himself, leaving his unsuspecting victim to eat unasked; for even conscience has her tricks of doing evil un-

wittingly. The doctor's example was enough for Morete, and she began aptly to eat the sugary peril. Yet the very newness of the taste made the first dose linger suspiciously on the girl's dainty lips, while she flashed a swift, questioning look upon her companion. But the die was cast! The doctor met her gaze with unruffled calmness, took another dose himself, and smiled upon the alarmed girl with exquisite deception, in answer to her questioning eyes.

Morete again followed the example of her loved companion. But as the subtle flavor yet dwelt unpleasantly on her palate, her noble lover took still another dose in an absent manner, smacking his lips with a show of relish, to make assurance doubly strong. Whom we most love can most easily deceive us. Dr. Greville's affability and coolness made him a worthy disciple of the Medicean methods, and should truly entitle him to the "six red balls on a field of gold."

Holding fast to the doctor's hand, Morete ate freely of the Gelsemia, behaving with becoming propriety to the end, though she would frequently turn abruptly to search his gray eyes, doting upon the loving looks which his pitying heart beamed down upon her. Had the eye of her premeditating murderer quailed, the half suspicious girl would doubtless have desisted from aiding in her own undoing.

Thus the two sat in the boat, side by side, surrounded by the orange trees, where the plummy palms

leaned high above their heads, mute witnesses of the cruel deed, — a lover dispensing poison to one he loved. The first effect noticed by the watchful physician was the gradual slowing down of the radial pulse, as Morete's wrist lay passively beneath his index finger. This was the first token of alarm, for the circulation of man is never much depressed. The heart became greatly agitated, and the girl's respiration labored more than it ought.

Greville's heart beat hard in response to that of his victim. The poison was working quickly, much as it had done with the animals, with the dread infallibility of death. Twenty minutes passed, leaving the doctor in a degree of doubt which was agonizing to bear. Then Morete began to brush the glimmering mists from before her eyes, and reach out her rosy fingers to clutch the visionary cobwebs in the air, which were but harmless symptoms. Then the delicate strawberry tint faded slowly out of the pretty lips, and a dusky blueness crept in, in its stead. The girl's hands grew cold and colder, purpling fast beneath the nails, and a quick shudder ran through the frame of the pitiable creature as she nestled confidently against her companion, in search of sympathy and warmth.

Tears streamed down the doctor's face as he awoke to the full horror of the deed, and the courage of the man of science almost forsook him. What to him, now, was the fame which he might win with the naturalists, or the cold commendation of the world!

The darling object of his affections lay dying in his arms. What though she was but a water-girl, it was enough that he loved her; better a thousand times than man can love his horse or his dog. In that dread moment he found that he loved her as though she were human.

He threw his arms about her in a tempest of passion with himself. He breathed into her gaping mouth to aid her struggling respiration. And he chafed and kneaded the region of the heart, to quicken its sluggish movement. He held her tightly to his own beating heart, to warm her cold and almost rigid body into life again.

Suddenly, in the midst of these endearments, Morete carried her hand to the region of the heart, and clutched the bosom as if in pain, while her face assumed an anxious, agonizing look, in place of her recent tranquil appearance. This admonished Greville that the final terrific heart spasms were about to take place; cardiac symptoms, which created a feeling in the men provers that, "My heart will stop beating if I don't move about." Truly alarming symptoms to the recipient, though they are removed in an instant by physical motion and muscular activity.

Thus forewarned the watchful physician was not surprised when this frightful cardiac disturbance came upon Morete. She suddenly sprang up with a wild outcry, and leaped to the shore to regain her suspended breath, and apparently with the intention

of taking to the water ; but the act of sudden motion quickly restored the automatic action of heart and lungs, quickened the circulation, and reddened the pallid lips again.

Not a muscle moved in the mobile face of the man of science to intimate his complicity in this fiendish act. With a smile, and a bland, gentle voice, he called Morete back to her nesting place by his side. She came with a wondering look at what had transpired, showing that inherent yearning for masculine sympathy which predominates the gentler sex, — whether brute or biped, — and gladly nestled beside her tormenter, and soon assumed her former quietude again.

To Greville's skilful eye there now seemed to be no more fear of spasms, or paresis of the heart, for the strong reaction of the organ made it thump within the girl's breast like a billow against the vessel's side. The result of this painful experience made it conclusive to the doctor that, however other mermaids might be classed by naturalist, Morete was certainly not one of the lower animals ; for she had escaped the fatal asphyxia, and thus far many of the toxic effects of Gelsemia were such as happened to the doctor himself.

In further proof that his dear little Morete was not a brute, like the pig or the seal, the pupils of her eyes now began to dilate largely ; while with all the animals, the pupils contracted to a pin's point. Being thus fully convinced in this matter, Greville

began to steadily ply the Gelsemia again to complete his task.

With some degree of compunction, the artful physician now took a pinch of the sugared poison as an intimation that it was a cure for all ills. His example was instantly followed by Morete, from an innate feeling in us all that when in pain we must do something — do anything — for remedial aid.

It was not long before the peach-bloom in Morete's cheeks began to fade, the rose-leaves died from her lips and the dusky hue of death spread over her face once more. For a while the remedy was stopped, for Greville had fully determined never again to risk the life of his darling, whom he now loved better than ever.

The eye symptoms now began to develop, coming to a climax as perfectly as with the three provers on board the ship. First, diplopia set in and everything showed double; double heads, double doctors. Looking at the sugar-box she beheld two boxes, and often reached for the delusive one for her honeyed poison. The hand she used appeared as two little dimpled palms with ten pink digits. With a silvery laugh, which was sweet as music to the doctor's ears, the girl called forth the right hand to inspect the twin hands upon the left; and lo! to her girlish wonderment, there appeared four hands fumbling for the box instead of two. Full of childish merriment at these strange optical illusions, Morete turned trustfully to her loved companion for an

explanation, and behold there were two friendly faces looking down into her luminous eyes.

After a half hour of these amusing freaks several doses of the remedy were administered, which induced the eyeballs to oscillate severely from side to side, whenever Morete made a strong endeavor to examine some blurred object. This symptom made it evident that a touch of amaurosis had set in. Before she became accustomed to one delusion, another equally strange took place.

Presently such a degree of shimmering wave-motion began to fill the atmosphere that it appeared to the girl like rolling water. Suddenly, with a most natural movement, Morete leaned forward with outstretched hands and endeavored to swim up to the surface. Feeling no watery element to resist her hands she seemed amazed at the delusion, and with a puzzled look turned to the doctor and hid her face with shame upon his breast.

In another brief half hour ptosis set in — paralysis of the levator muscles — and the eyelids drooped over the languid eyes, finally closing so that the long, black lashes lay pencilled on her olive cheeks. This did not create any uneasiness in the girl; she seemed to think it was only drowsiness, and like a sleepy child she crept more closely into the arms of him she loved so dearly, not in the least suspecting his deceptive friendship.

The afternoon was advancing, and Greville saw that the tragic scene must be pushed to a close.

For a time the Gelsemia was given in larger doses and more frequently repeated. It was not long before the delusions which had served to make merriment were wholly subdued. Grim and gaunt was the spectral hand that now clutched the vital life of the maiden. Link after link every motor nerve soon yielded to the subtile power of the remedy. Paresis of the eyelids was soon followed by paralysis of the tongue and vocal chords, leaving the pretty warbler without further power to talk or sing.

These paretic conditions came upon Morete so suddenly that they aroused her fears, and she turned an appealing face upon the doctor. But her eyelids refused to open and disclose her ambushed eyes. This increased her fear and compelled her to pluck up one lid with her fingers, that she might cast a reproving glance upon the twin faces above her. One face, a total delusion; the other, false alike to the love and confidence which she bestowed upon it.

The right hand soon refused to uphold the lid and dropped paralyzed by her side. This left her in darkness and compelled her to use the left hand to assist in seeing. The next toxic effect of the poison acted diagonally,—similar to lobelia,—going across from the right arm to the left leg, which was paralyzed in an instant.

Morete was just in time to witness a triumphant look flush over Greville's face. The exultant man knew the pathogenesis of his poison all too well.

Until that instant, considerable strength remained in the girl's limbs; enough so that she could at any time have leaped into the water and escaped to her bower. Now the left leg was powerless. This was determined by the prick of a pin. The same test applied to the right leg caused an indignant response, which would have broken the doctor's ribs had he received the blow. Peering out from under Morete's one lifted lid, there now came the saddest and most heart-breaking look of all; and it brought the hot tears into the eyes of her tormenter.

"Drop-hand" paralysis now seized upon Morete's left hand, till it dropped lifeless; and she was again deprived of the power of seeing. This last mishap shut out the sunny sky from her view, perhaps forever. The bending trees that murmured sweetly in the breeze were hidden. And above all, the loved face, upon which she doted with a measure of love that was almost human, could be seen no more.

Though Morete appeared to be hovering so near the border-line of death that the trembling balance almost kicked the beam, still the pulseless creature retained her sensibility. While Greville's original plan was to produce unconsciousness, lest it should craze the timid thing to imprison her, yet her wreck was already so cruel and complete that he might well hesitate to use further active measures. As he witnessed her deplorable condition, he half relented the inhuman deed. Folding the corpse-like girl tenderly in his arms, he whispered gentle, soothing words in

her ear; and mourned over the cold, pale creature as a mother might mourn the death of her first-born.

Thus he sat and wept, and watched the almost imperceptible changes going on in the dying life-current. Saw the girl's shapely head become too heavy for her swan-like neck to bear, droop and fall helpless upon his arm. Then her lips became purple and parted till her pearly teeth lay bare; while her breath grew fainter, coming at increasing intervals, till each gasp seemed to be her last. At length the tear-blinded man saw Morete's last remnant of strength depart; waning little by little, it flickered for an instant like an expiring taper and went out. Her little frame quivered and he felt her grow rigid in the final spasm of death.

Fearing lest this was irredeemable death which lay so lovingly in his arms, Greville lost heart when contemplating his crime and began pleading piteously for Divine aid in this hour of peril. At length, overcoming his grief and mastering his contrition, he wrapped the girl's long silky hair carefully about her shapely limbs. Taking off his flannel sacque, he put it upon his darling, to further shield her loved form from view of unhallowed eyes. For criminal as he was, he could not permit another to look upon the dead sea-girl as he had done.

Tenderly and lovingly he laid the limp form out on the cushioned sail and folded it carefully about her, leaving only her sweet young face free to the air. Believing that Morete would never rally to life

again, Greville delayed going aboard that he might offer one last earnest prayer for mercy. And he yet shrank from exhibiting his grief or his love to other eyes, while he shuddered at the thought of becoming the butt of his rude forecastle shipmates, like old Tom and his ilk.

But the day was drawing to a close and he could tarry no longer. He rose from his knees and went forward, and set a blue waif in the bow, a signal which had been agreed upon with the captain if the mermaid was captured. Pushing the boat quietly from the shore, Greville plied his paddle with care, gliding noiselessly over the placid bay in the direction of the Fleetwing.

With haggard face and unnerved arm the half-dazed man worked his paddle like one in a dream. Such was his mental aberration for the moment, that he could not forbear casting many a furtive glance into the sea beneath, apprehensive lest some bearded monster might appear and claim the dead girl as his own again.

It was a time of day when the western forest began to cast long, ominous shadows out over the hyaline bay, though the lingering sunset still illuminated the coral bottom beneath the boat, and gilded its flimsy battlements and castellated walls with aqueous gold. Piercing down into the dim sandy reaches and piscatory travel-ways the flashing sunbeams emblazoned the bottom with glory.

The sea everywhere savors of romance, even in

our own unpropitious clime. But here, in the bland tropics where nature is most prolific, man's spirit ever lives a-tip-toe in his calmest moods. Thus, awed by his own reflections, and his possible crime, with trembling hand Greville frequently lifted the kerchief that veiled the dead girl's face; listening, while his heart stood still, for the restored respiration of his darling. Dipping his paddle-blade cautiously in the windless water, with an aspect akin to fear, Greville cowered at seeing his own image reflected in the glassy bay.

While passing over the sunken "case" of Mocha Dick, out scrambled the five new-born devil-fishes, attracted by the passing shadow of the boat. One of the embryo monsters, more nimble than his fellow imps, sprang up to the surface and seized the gunwale with three of his tentacles, careening the boat so as to rock the dead girl rudely.

Horried at the intrusion, with three quick strokes of his paddle on the slimy claws the doctor made the young whelp withdraw. But not for long, for at some signal or cry of pain communicated to the others, the whole four savage creatures also came in chase of the boat. When the five claw-handed beasts seized upon the gunwales, Greville called lustily for help — believing that the deserved retribution had overtaken him — though he fought bravely with his paddle till assistance came.

Two boats pulled quickly to his relief, though barely in time to prevent Greville from being cap-

sized with his precious freight. Owing to the sea-beasts attacking both gunwales at once, one set counteracted the other, till Braybrook and Uncle Joe arrived. Armed with long cutting spades, the crews soon succeeded in cutting the whole five beast-whelps to pieces, happily for other ships, that might make a port at the Isle of Palms in coming years. For no vessel could stand the attack of five full-grown monsters of the kind.

When the blue waif was discovered drooping from its staff at the bow of Greville's boat, great was the stir and excitement on board the Fleetwing. The men were mustered aft, ready to hoist the boat and the captured mermaid when she came alongside. Thus, when the decapods attacked the doctor, the crew were at hand to quickly man the other boats and pull to his rescue.

As Greville ran his boat under the ship's quarter the davit-tackles were swung out over the bow and stern, and a nimble sailor slid down each tackle-fall to hook on for hoisting. In another minute the boat swung clear of the water and was rapidly ascending to the davit-heads, amidst the wild shouts of a cheery hoisting song. Then the mate bellowed lustily in a roaring voice to the men, "Avast hoisting! Put the boat on the cranes," making a rumpus, as the sailors say, sufficient to "awake the dead." The noise truly did make the apparently dead girl quiver from head to foot, for Morete had not shown a sign of life until the boat was hoisted nearly up to its place.

Just then the doctor bared the girl's face, while preparing to take her aboard, and was astonished to discover a positive look of alarm where all had previously been placid as marble. The flexor muscle of her least paralyzed leg was seen to visibly swell and contract, showing a strong futile effort to flex the limb and get up.

When the boat was securely griped on the cranes, Captain Lawrence was told what had happened. He immediately ordered the men, who were crowding noisily about, to disperse quietly, and make no noise for the present. Then Greville took the semi-conscious girl in his arms and lulled and soothed the trembling creature into complete placidity again. This accomplished, he folded the sail about the limp form, carried her gently into the cabin, and laid her in the berth of an after stateroom, previously prepared for her reception.

At Greville's request, Captain Lawrence excluded from the after cabin all others but himself and Uncle Joe, for both the officers and crew were very eager to be entertained with a side-show, now that the mermaid was in the toils of the showman. This, Greville had determined should not be permitted, and the captain readily sided with the physician, when he learned the doctor's tender sentiments about the girl.

Then began the formidable task of resuscitation. Could the dead be made to live again? was a question no one could answer in the affirmative. When

Greville first saw Morete's alarmed face, and discovered that a vital spark of the God-given life still lingered in her marble clay, it seemed as if a Divine word had been audibly whispered in his ear. His heart was made strong with renewed confidence in his skill and he was premonished of victory.

Link by link the skilled physician had now to unlock the deathly chain that held Morete in bondage. He must recover the corpse-like creature from her chill, lethal state, in the exact retrograde of her cruel imprisonment. Herein lies the most profound example of exact prognosis found in medical lore; wherein the morbid effects in administering a poison may be predicted without the slightest deviation, and where — more wonderful still — the antidotal recuperant will act with equal celerity and certitude in rallying the moribund subject back into life unharmed.

The pathogenesis — or disease-producing effect — of no remedy can be so beautifully exemplified as that of Gelsemia. This implies that its curative properties in counteracting morbid conditions and natural diseases are equally positive, novel and unique.

By the remedial aid of Gelsemia many of those unnatural physical sufferings which most keenly awaken the sympathy of mankind — maternity — may be alleviated in an instant, and made effective in an hour. It can be used almost to the exclusion of those clumsy, life-crippling instruments, properly called for only in some abnormal conditions, or a true malformation.

Would that this appeal might be emblazoned upon the banners of the world, for a greater truth never confronted a more criminal ignorance. Attest it, ye child-bearers of my country, who break like a girdled reed—not bow to rise again—in the first harvest wind that bends the ripened grain.

When Morete was placed in her berth and disencumbered of the sail, Greville began his restorative labor upon the statuesque form. She lay breathless and cold, her ghastly pallor contrasting strangely with the raven blackness of her hair. Her eyes were closed, her lips were parted and her mouth agape; and it was only by the slightest sobbing pulsation of the heart, caught by the attentive ear upon the breast, that even an expert could distinguish a sign of life in the beautiful chrysalis.

Drop by drop the anxious doctor placed his antidotal stimulant upon the girl's rigid tongue; this he continued fast as the liquid could be absorbed, while the captain kept up a vigorous hand friction at the base of the brain, downward along the spine, and upon the palms and soles of the feet. For an hour the two men labored unceasingly, without seeing the slightest appearance of life to repay their exertions; yet it was not labor lost, for the tongue was made less rigid, the face less pale and the body less cold. Still, to the inexperienced eye, the girl appeared a corpse as much as ever.

After a half hour's respite, another hour was given to these gentle magnetic manipulations, which in-

duced a faint sigh from the girl, together with a slight gurgling noise at the heart, followed by a few irregular beats. It was now deemed time to apply the lightest possible touches of electricity, judiciously used only through the hand of the operator.

The electric current acted quickly. The fingers moved and the right leg flexed strongly upon the abdomen in an instant. The eyelids showed a tremulous motion, and the body quivered as with a sudden chill. Just here the skilled applicant was content to stop, fully satisfied with the energetic response he had obtained, well knowing that danger lies in over-anxious haste, through sudden reaction.

The tongue of the little sea-girl had now become relaxed sufficiently for Greville to draw it out and free the glottis from froth and tenacious sputa, which the remedy had induced to flow from the salivary glands. When this was accomplished, the doctor closed the nostrils and forced his own warm breath into the girl's lungs. This important accessory treatment was repeated at frequent intervals.

No further use of the battery was deemed expedient. Occasional friction, and frequent use of the capsicum internally were continued until the circulation was fairly established. In three hours from the beginning of treatment the heart action was regular, but weak and easily agitated by a noise or a jar. Now and then an irregular sighing showed that the lungs were gradually freeing themselves from the

paretic condition. Thus the dead girl was slowly and steadily warming back into approximate life.

This was as far as the careful physician wished to proceed for the present, as the ship was to sail in the early morning, when the noise of weighing anchor and making sail, the rattling cable and the confused din of cordage and blocks, would serve to craze one so timid and sensitive as Morete. The doctor motioned the captain away, and quietly closed the stateroom door. Calling to Uncle Joe, who was wrestling in prayer on the opposite side of the cabin, Greville bade him make no more outcry, for the death-bond was broken, and the little sea-girl was saved. The saintly old man intimated that mediation with the Lord had done more to save her than medical skill — and who can tell?

CHAPTER XXX.

HOMeward BOUND.

THROUGHOUT the day the Fleetwing had teemed like a beehive, alow and aloft, with busy labor. The song and chorus of the seamen while reeving rigging aloft among the masts and yards, and the stentorian shouts of the imperious mates, had filled the harbor with boisterous voices, till the forest glades and coral shores had echoed back with responses of gladness,—as when Eden newly awaked to the voice of primal man.

Now the hand of toil is idle. The evening meal is passed. The dog-watch gossips are abroad; and the three usual groups of men—in tripple grades strong as Hindoo castes—have gathered in social clusters at the bow, the stern, and in the intermediate waist, amidships. Resting from their labors, one and all sit peering out from their fruit-laden bower among the bird-covered boughs, up through their only outlet to the sky, now filled with palpitating stars.

Twilight deepens quickly in the tropics. Swathy

Night strides up the orient, swiftly pursued by the advancing shadows. The earliest stars ever surprise the beholder by their suddenness, as each pale and pensile orb throbs out through the swift-gathering gloom. To-night the blinking star-beams peer down through the skyward apertures, — like children from a door ajar, — pallid with awe as they watch with wide-eyed gaze to behold the mysterious darkness roll noiseless up the ocean road.

Profound and peaceful is the delicious sense of calm that drops down over all in the mellow hour of twilight. An hour since, the myriad birds were chanting their vesper hymns, — a jubilous chorus to the solemn anthem of the sea, the variant voices of the cooing trades and murmuring trees. Now the wind and waves have sung themselves to sleep, companion playmates throughout the livelong day; and the fronds of the swaying palms have hushed their drooping plumes to slumber, till they stand along the shore in the dusky twilight like sombre nuns bowed in evening prayer.

At early dawn the Fleetwing will spread her long-folded wings to the breeze and flit away over the western sea; and few if any of her loving subjects will ever behold the Isle of Palms again. Like the pensive feelings of regret which we endure when parting with a human friend, was the kindred sadness of the ship's people at the thought of leaving this enchanting scene.

Here they had found a friendly haven when the

vessel was in a crippled condition. A providential shelter, which had saved the lives of all, for the crushed ship could not have survived the typhoon she subsequently encountered. Not only safety had been proffered the battered ship and her wounded crew, but millions of wealth and months of joyous pleasuring among luscious fruits and fragrant flowers.

During the evening the doctor related the circumstances of his capturing Morete, which all were eager to hear. He dwelt long upon the terrible compunctions he endured from fears of killing the girl in his attempt to secure her. It was an awe-inspiring theme when he graphically portrayed the frightful and deadly effect which the poison had upon the strong vitality of the girl. He expressed great relief that she was secured without harm being done to her, and ended by inducing Captain Lawrence to promise him that no other person should assume control over the sensitive creature, which was readily conceded.

Numerous were the plans made for the future during the evening's talk. Many told what they would do with their gold when once they were established ashore. Braybrook vowed that he would wed the first dark-eyed, curly-headed girl that came athwart his hawse; bank his money and go west on a farm, so far away from the sea that he could never smell salt water again. How prophetic this man's idle talk proved, as the future history of Braybrook deter-

mined, for he married the dark-eyed daughter of the English consul at St. Helena, went west and became a landholder in Michigan.

The mate's innocent allusion to dark-eyed girls appeared to be personal, and struck home to the heart of the meditative captain, and he was silent and subdued during the rest of the evening. Thus the gossiping mates did not elicit the captain's plans for future investments.

Some of the boatsteerers were heard relating where they would build their cottages by the sea; making choice of various places, from the rugged cliffs of Marblehead to the beautiful sand hills of dear old 'Tucket. None among them all seemed to aspire to the show and grandeur commensurate with their wealth.

Among the seamen, Tom Crawford was easily induced to recount some of his profound plans for the future. He meant to buy a clipper schooner; sheath her bottom with number one copper, to last a life-time; freight her with plenty of jimeracks, pipes, rum and tobacco, for native trade; ship old Buntline for his mate, and come out and colonize the Isle of Palms, of which he would be the governor. He further disclosed some of his ulterior views on colonization; he would buy plenty of shark-hooks and lassoes, and catch mermaids for the home colony, including specimens for Barnum. Tom was evidently as deeply smitten with Morete as the doctor.

Since their vast accession of wealth, of course there was no more thought of continuing the voyage. Captain Lawrence had long since decided to sail direct for Hong Kong. There he would dispose of the treasure for bills of exchange on New York or London, and perhaps purchase a cargo of silks and teas at Canton; something suitable for the home market.

The night passed silent and tranquil as a lover's dream. Morete rested easily, in an unconscious state; her heart-beat and respiration growing stronger through the night. She was in a condition to be easily brought out of her trance-like state when the proper time came to complete her cure.

Morning dawned sweetly upon the day of sailing. The officers and some of the crew had been early astir, wishing to partake of a meditative smoke and hoard up a last look of the sylvan beauties of the place. For the little haven had been to them a timely shelter, and aside from their good fortune in finding the Spanish wreck, most of the seamen were warmly attached to the pretty Isle.

It is the nature of prosaic man to cling to his frigid, rock-bound home; and not one of all these sea-worn mariners but would now willingly leave this fairest of tropic isles to the birds and the breeze which they found in possession. Thus the elements which comprise a home are not wholly made up of a sunny clime, prolific groves or fruit-bearing trees and odorous flowers; not merely a place to please the eye with sylvan beauty, enough almost to draw

the angels down, but it is a homespun thing of heart-strings—torn and trampled though they be. The home-love of these rugged New England seamen was elastic enough to permit a hemisphere to thrust in between them and their hearth-stone, but strong as cables to draw them back again.

It was one of those clear, breezeless mornings, when the night-roving perfumes from the aromatic forest linger lazily on folded wing, seeking to coquette a while with the salmon-colored dawn; a day so tender in tint and tone that all things in nature seemed melodized for the happiness of man. The slumbering birds had not yet awakened to greet the coming day, nor had the chirping crickets or singing lizards abated their nightly bugle notes—though warned by the increasing tumult of the breakers of the approaching day.

Early as it was, good old Uncle Joe had long been absent from the ship, praying on the Bird's Nest. The pious soul could not forbear to once more render thanks to the Heavenly Father, mindful of God's watchful care and the great good fortune bestowed upon the Fleetwing. Not for himself had Joe Bailey asked for riches, for his days were numbered, and he had dwelt so long upon the sea that he had acquired wealth enough and to spare for many a charitable cause.

It was in the interest of others that the saintly old man sculled out in the darkness to kneel beside the vine-covered coffins of his shipmates. There

he prayed among the dewy foliage and the fresh-blooming flowers, in his simple, child-like way,—prayers that seemed strangely acceptable to the Divine ear.

The first bird-notes that awoke the other songsters of the forest came from a little brown linnet, perched among the ticking leaves of the clock-plant, just above the hoary head of the penitent pleader. In after years Mr. Bailey often spoke of this sudden bird-song, bursting in upon his laboring soul like some spirit voice in answer to his prayer.

The prophetic visions disclosed to the wizard eye of Uncle Joe during this solemn midnight prayer, were made known to no one until long after. The predictions were so strange and improbable, that even the aged augur could not credit the portentous events; yet they all came to pass. But it was noticed in the coming days that Bailey was much occupied with trance-like reveries, in which some terrible premonition weighed upon his mind. It was feared that the grim seer had made some ominous forecast about the captain; for his weird gaze was often fixed in solemn pre-occupation upon his loved commander. At such times the tender-hearted man would choke with emotion, and tears would stream down the corrugated channels of his wrinkled face, while his lips quivered with inaudible prayer.

The heavy thump of a handspike, pounding three times upon the fore-castle deck, was the signal for

the slumbering crew to muster up to the duties of the day. The thundering voice of the handspike was supplemented by the sonorous cry of Tom Crawford calling down the companion-way, “All hands a-boy ! Muster up, we’re home’ard bound !” An announcement that electrified every soul in the ship.

Without waiting for breakfast, sails were loosed, and the slack cable hove in until the anchor hung apeak ; then the topsails were sheeted home, and hoisted with many a spontaneous burst of song, until even the tiny skysail was seen fluttering among the tree-tops, like the last pennant of gay ribbon a full-rigged lassie pins to her hair.

One of Tom’s extemporized ditties will denote the sentiment of the hour : —

“Home’ard bound ! home’ard bound !
O’er ther breeze an’ ther breakers,
Bearin’ treasure we’ve found
Fur ther gals who will take us, —
God furgive who fursake us.

“Oft ther gals who fursake us,
Havin’ larned we ’ave gold,
Am ther gals who will take us,
Though they long have been cold.
Ay ! ther false, who fursake us,
Love us dearly, wid gold !”

When all sail was set, leeches and foot-ropes bowsed taut as harp-strings, then the windlass was again manned, the anchor hove to the bow and

catted, amidst the wildest shouts of jubilation. Hastening from the windlass and the cat-tackle, the merry Fleetwing sprang to the tow-lines, fastened to the trees on each side of the inlet, and carefully warped the ship out through the yielding boughs that barred the passage with their long plummy leaves, verily like friendly hands enticing the ship to remain.

When the vessel drew slowly out through the narrow entrance, one by one her white sails filled to the rising breeze. First the tiny skysail caught the morning trades, swelling its exultant bosom like a bird ere it bursts into song. Then the three royals and top-gallant sails filled, as with a bound of joy. And as the Fleetwing fairly freed herself from the encroaching trees, and men cut the two tow-lines as they passed, then the great topsails took the wind full and fair upon their taut canvas, and put their broad shoulders to the homeward task.

Once fairly out into the open sea, and it became doubtful about the ship's weathering the reef-point without tacking. She was put upon a taut bowline, and kept touch-and-go to the trades, but even then she would not avoid a dangerous proximity to the jutting reef.

Here was a dilemma, for sailors are superstitious about tacking to avoid the first danger after leaving port. Like a woman's whims about going back to the house after some forgotten thing. Captain Lawrence was walking on the cabin-deck, as much

annoyed by the occurrence as any Jack of them all. He finally resorted to one of those nice points of seamanship known as a "half-board."

Hailing Tom Crawford, whose towering figure was most often seen at the helm on all critical occasions, the captain bade him :

"Take the wheel, Tom, and humor the lassie by a few half-boards, to pass that reef."

"Ay, ay, sir! Ther boys wuz moughty feared you'd tack ther critter round, an' spile ther luck o' ther home'ard voy'ge."

"Oh, they were, ha? They are a superstitious set. Now keep her rap-full for a minute and gather headway for a half-board."

"Full it am, sir. She acts ar bit awry, fust off, like ar 'oman flauntin' 'er new bunit 'fore ther parson on Sabber-day."

"Yes, I see she does. Now luff her. A few spokes at a time, for she frets at the bridle after her long pasturing among the palm-trees."

"Luff it am, sir. She's ar mettlesum jade, an' springs 'er luff too quick. Mought it be, sir, thet she am ar trifle by ther head? an' is hankerin' fur 'nother millon o' gold in 'er run?"

"Perhaps so, Tom. But she'll be all the more weatherly, working out through the trades, on a wind. Up your helm, and keep away before she loses her speed. Steady, as you go. Flutter the leech of the skysail a trifle."

"Ay, ay, sir."

“How’s that for a weather gauge, Mr. Braybrook?” he hailed to the mate, perched on the fore-topsail yard.

“She’ll hardly pass free yet, sir.”

“Give her another half-board, Tom; we don’t want to risk this pretty cargo of ours.”

“’Nuther board ’tis, sir.” Tom again eased away the wheel a few spokes and forced the vessel straight into the wind’s eye, and before her headway was gone, he up helm and kept her away by the wind once more.

“Ease your helm, and throw her up again, Tom.”

“Ay, ay, sir!”

And once again the fleet ship fluttered her white plumage in the eye of the wind, — as a lordly eagle shakes his pinions when disdainfully weathering a crag, — then filled away and ran swiftly by the obtruding danger, having gained an offing by her own vast momentum, part of her burthen being silver and gold.

Once past the jutting coral and the yards were squared in as the ship was kept before the wind, along a western course which held the white-lipped breakers close aboard. When the Fleetwing drew out from under the island, and took the unimpeded trades upon her quarter, her course was shaped W. by N. for the Pelews, and her studding-sails were set to quicken her speed and get her fully used to the harness.

Greville had been called out the previous midnight to assume watch over Morete. Bailey had kept watch over the sleeping girl until then, when he took a boat and paddled ashore to pray-out the remainder of the night on Bird's Nest. The doctor found Morete reposing in a restful, quiet sleep. The rhythmical beat of the heart had become almost normal, and while the respiration was regular, it still continued slow and weak. This denoted that the paralytic lesion yet lingered in considerable force about the pneumogastric and phrenic nerves, at their source, near the base of the brain.

The skilled eye of the physician soon comprehended where the difficulty lay and saw that a slight touch of the electric current at the source of trouble would be all-sufficient to bring the patient into full consciousness again. But Greville's object was to keep the wild creature in a synoptic state through the night, and until the ship was fairly at sea and quiet restored on deck.

Now that the Fleetwing had squared away along the barrier-reef, the doctor set himself to the task of a final restoration. It chanced to be Mr. Bailey's forenoon watch below, and though he had been up watching and praying throughout the night, the tender-hearted old man willingly proffered his services to assist in bringing Morete to full consciousness once more. The captain was busy laying out some potato-pens on deck, in which to stow away

the recruits to be obtained at the Pelews. All other persons were rigidly excluded from the cabin during the recuperative experiments.

It was found an easy matter to simply arouse the girl to a state of consciousness; but when a fairly complete intelligence was restored she could neither open her eyes, move her limbs nor speak a word. When her eyelids were lifted by hand, she stared at the doctor for a brief time before she could recognize him, though her eyes had lost their opaque appearance and shone luminous as ever. Suddenly, intelligence crept into her brain and she knew the face that was bending lovingly over her. Then her pale face flushed and broke radiantly out into a smile of gladness. She struggled to lift her hands to reach out to the loved friend, but they would not move. Sadness stole over her face like a black shadow, and a pitiable look of apprehension took the place of her recent joy.

After a half hour's vigorous hand friction, mostly applied along the spine, Morete began to open and shut her hands, and she soon after stretched her well-moulded arms to their full extent, like one arousing from slumber. This was sufficient intimation for the use of electricity. A gentle current was applied, with immediate results. From that moment the girl's lungs began to fill with a deep-chested breathing, and her heart bounded with a strong, steady beat. She now thrust out her tongue and began to stretch it, as if it were rigid and numb,

and in a few minutes the dumb member began to prattle glibly, to her great delight. She talked of the sugar-box and began to grope about to find it, thinking she was still in the boat, at her own loved Palm Isle, lying in the arms of her companion.

Further application of the battery overcame the paralysis of the lids, and the girl could open her eyes and stare about upon her new quarters. She seemed greatly mystified at the white ceiling overhead, and questioned the meaning of the glass bull's eye at the side of her berth. She seemed quite startled at seeing several pairs of trowsers hanging at the end of the room, possibly thinking that they were the cast-off skins of the dreaded ship's people.

When Uncle Joe thrust in his time-bleached head and furrowed face at the door, the girl clung with both hands to Greville's arm, and stared and trembled with unfeigned terror, probably deeming the grotesque apparition one of the dreadful old sea-tyrants who had disciplined and tormented her under the sea in youthful days, — monsters that had caused her to desert her mermaid tribes in the coral grottoes, and take a seaside tenement on the land, to escape such cruel sea-beasts. When the old wizard smiled upon her and spoke gently, in a strained effort to be agreeable, alas, Morete took the frightful contortions of the one-eyed face and the grin of the mouth unfamiliar with teeth as a terrible denunciation, and shrank from the dear old man with added fear and trembling.

Greville was of the opinion that it might be several days before Morete's legs acquired their full strength. Until then there would be no probability of her trying to escape. In the meantime a strong leather belt was made to fasten about her waist, with a length of lance-line attached, by which to secure her when she was taken on deck. The large stern windows had been strongly barred, and a watch would be constantly kept over the outer cabin door.

When Morete was made comfortable, and had drank the milk of two cocoa-nuts and eaten several bananas, dear old Uncle Joe, ever thoughtful of the wants of others, volunteered his services to do the dress-making and millinery for the distinguished lady passenger. The doctor, who for the present was Morete's major-domo, gladly accepted his offer — never having taken a stitch himself.

After much bewildering discussion about the cut, style and material of this *recherche* affair, the chief mantua-maker, Mr. Joe Bailey, decided that their first attempt should be a simply-made Mother Hubbard, a dress suitable for all occasions, whether for night or day. Following the dress-maker's directions, the doctor proceeded to the delicate matter of measuring the length, depth and beam, at the neck and amidships, of the lady in question. This accomplished, Uncle Joe cut the dress, and with the steward's assistance went nimbly to work upon the pretty pattern of French calico.

When it became known that a sewing-bee had

been established in the cabin, contributions became the order of the day. Old Tom sent aft a red flannel shirt and a pair of number eleven brogans. The first he intimated would make a good roomy petticoat, while the last, if a wee bit too large, might be stuffed at the toes with cotton and be made to fit.

Among the gifts most available was a pretty pair of home-made slippers, contributed by the cabin-boy. Captain Lawrence added two ruffled French calico shirts, and a pair of long, pink-colored lamb's-wool stockings to the little lady's wardrobe. The stockings were some that dear old Aunt Sarah tucked into his chest every voyage. Best of all, the captain bestowed an old ensign in the name of the ship, out of which to make several easy flowing, fluffy skirts.

This latter gift stimulated the dress-maker to construct a dress proper for some state occasion.

The gay stockings and the embroidered shoes were well thought of. Though women are accustomed to sudden and radical changes of fashion, they are often known to rebel when some new vogue prevents the display of their most available charms. So with Miss Morete; the style which she had been accustomed to permitted the display of a pretty pair of legs to the sun and the sea. Now unless she could be captivated by some gayly-colored adornment for her limbs the pert little miss would most likely prefer to go bare-legged, that being the most approved, and, as far as she knew, prevalent fashion.

Upon the second day out the doctor found that his

patient could begin to use her legs fairly well. She was assisted to rise and helped to walk about the lower cabin for exercise. Now the prompt services of a *femme de chambre* were required to array the pretty convalescent in her new robes, and the pink appendages for the legs. Morete had daily been shown the several serviceable articles of dress, and by signs and personal application was made to understand what use they were to be put.

The time had come to make a practical use of the garments which had been the source of amusement to all. Unfortunately Dr. Greville was a bachelor, and had not the remotest idea how a woman began to dress. Whether she put on her right stocking or her left one first, was a sore puzzle for the man of science to ponder.

Not to be deterred by such trivialities, the doctor caught up a stocking and grabbed a leg, and ingeniously contrived to adapt the one to the other, in spite of Morete's kicking and scolding. After successfully repeating this operation, the impatient man incased the gayly stockinged feet in slippers — much to the admiration of the miss and the man-maid.

Then the Mother Hubbard was taken in hand. Again the doctor was confronted by a serious quandary: whether a woman ascended heavenward into her dress, like a lark at morn, or put it upon the floor and plunged downward into the dainty folds. It was recorded as one of Uncle Joe's suggestions that in bending a sail it must first be hoisted up to

the yard. So the Mother Hubbard was hoisted aloft and got down over the head of the rebellious lady. The arms were bowsed into place — starboard and aport — in true regulation manner. And when the creditable garment was buttoned at the neck, and smoothed down fore-and-aft, it made a very pretty appearance.

Morete gave rather premature expression to her dislike of the whole affair by trying to pull it off, with an angry expression in her own musical tongue: “*Ke pau mai-ko-la!*” — the petticoat is worthless. With a firm hand and stern look Greville restrained the petulant beauty from disrobing herself. Awed and resisted, Morete took time to view herself in the glass — which she had been previously made acquainted with — and at length came to admire her adornments, and reluctantly submitted to wear them, chiefly because her loved companion signified that as he wore a dress she must.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE LADY PASSENGER.

FIVE days' sailing before the gentle trade-wind brought the ship in sight of the Pelew Islands. She was taken in off Yap, or Hunter's Island, and lay-to through the night. The following day was given to trading with the natives. Several boat-loads of pigs, fowl, sweet potatoes and taro were purchased, for which was bartered gay-colored calico in lengths sufficient for the holiday *malos* of the chiefs, together with fish-hooks, knives, and bits of iron hoop large enough for spear-heads — man-killing instruments, for they are a war-making people.

Sufficient recruits having been bartered for, the decks were cleared of natives. Their canoes were cast off from alongside and sent adrift, with many kindly greetings from the hospitable Pelews. Sail was made, and the ship was kept away on her course, leaving the brown-backed natives to paddle back to their prolific shores, enriched by a few pieces of calico — superfluous to their needs — for

with their customs of nudity and absence of restraint, a girdle of tough leaves best becomes their exuberant clime.

From the stern cabin windows Morete saw the natives flitting back and forth in their canoes, heard them talk, and for a wonder caught the meaning of much that they were saying. This surprised Greville, for the girl had not shown herself proficient in acquiring the English tongue. Yet she ever after made use of Pelew words with great familiarity.

In the evening, after the ship left the Pelews, there was an interesting group gathered on the quarter-deck of the Fleetwing. In the centre of this social circle of mixed nautical men sat a charming girl of about twenty summers—as human ages go—quaintly dressed in a neat calico waist with short sleeves and a broad, turn-down collar. The girl's skirt was made of bunting, in which the stars and stripes of the loved American flag contributed an agreeable feature.

A jaunty sailor hat, having a band of blue ribbon with long, flowing ends, was upon her head; while her extremities were adorned with gayly-colored stockings, her small, shapely feet were fitly embellished with embroidered slippers; decorations for which the little miss seemed to have great appreciation, for she pleased herself by showing her new attire to every one who approached her, with an innocent, childlike manner, far removed from guile.

The hair of this brown, Spanish-looking girl was

her most conspicuous beauty ; long and black, silky and soft in texture, it hung in inconceivable masses over her shoulders and about her petit form. Such a luxuriant growth as is rarely seen beyond the limit of the tropics.

The girl's eyes were large, dark and languishing as a reindeer's ; winsome and expressive, whether melting with love or flashing with ire. The mouth was small and sweet, lips arched and full, and high colored. Nothing could be more contagious than the merry laugh, or sweeter than her roguish smile.

Her face was a charming study as she sat nestled by the doctor's side, expressing such outspoken affection for her companion and showing dislike or approval for everything she saw. It was a face to love at sight and linger over with admiration. A face in which all that transpired was glassed as plainly as ever mirror reflected human actions ; and neither pen nor pencil could hope to portray its ever-varying lights and shadows.

It was Morete's first appearance on deck, where she was confronted face to face with strange men of many nationalities. At present she seemed to be more of a listener than a talker, though she noted everything, and smiled, frowned, and shrugged her shoulders in scorn or queenly commendation, as the case might be. Silent and shy as she now appeared, she was an inveterate prattler when below with her keepers — Uncle Joe and the doctor.

A stranger might well have been shocked to ob-

serve a stout girdle about the waist of this quiet, olive-faced girl, and puzzled to see a similar belt about her companion; the two strongly leashed together by a few fathoms of lance-line. This show of bondage seemed to imply that the girl, intelligent as she appeared, was perhaps subject to some mental aberration; yet it never would prompt one to doubt of the purely human origin of a creature so beautiful and attractive as Morete.

Not the slightest paralytic effect remained of Morete's terrible poisoning by Gelsemia. In fact, Dr. Greville justly affirmed that the toxemia which she had undergone was beneficial, as its remedial action had certainly alleviated, if not wholly cured, the girl's occasional grief-stricken frenzy, — a touch of mania, previously caused by slight brainer anæmia.

While the officers were talking and laughing in their boisterous way, relating some strange reminiscence of previous adventures among the Pelews, — between their frequent smoke-puffs, — Morete was content to sit and hold the doctor's hand in her two dimpled palms, and give attentive ear to the storytellers. When at length the garrulous mates came to a pause, and gave themselves up to a quiet, reflective smoke, and Morete was confronted with silence, and hedged about by grim, smoke-beclouded men, then the animated girl became wholly absorbed in her companion, to the exclusion of all others.

At such times Morete was satisfied to sit in silence and gaze thoughtfully into the doctor's eyes, drink-

ing in his responsive glances with as much relish as the desert traveller quenches his thirst at the cool springs of an oasis. One would have thought that Morete must have spied upon a pair of human lovers to have caught the infection so true to life. Or might it be that love is but a typical disease of the cardiac organ, common to all time, and which afflicts all forms of intelligence, however embodied?

Uncle Joe now joined the group at the stern. After drinking his fill at the water piggin, the old patriarch leaned his tall ungainly form against the scuttle-butt, and seemed to greatly enjoy the novel scene before him. His leathery, corrugated face contorted into a hideous grin — meant for a smile — until his weather-beaten visage glowed like a sun-beam perched on a storm-cloud.

The dear old soul found pleasure in watching Morete toying with Greville's garnet seal. She repeatedly tried the glittering gem upon her own brown fingers, delighted to see it flash its crimson flame in the setting sun. A ripple of delicious laughter frequently burst from the impulsive creature at some new adjustment of the garnet, showing that vanity is the same sweet feminine trait among the sea nereids as with shore damsels.

Next to the doctor, Morete was mostly attached to the fatherly black man. Uncle Joe had ever been her affectionate attendant, not only taking charge of her when her chief keeper was asleep, but she was indebted to his ebony fingers for cutting her dresses,

and doing most of her needle-work. So, whether the little sea-girl looked upon the sable veteran as her paternal Nereus, or humble Ganymede, she certainly reserved for her tender-hearted mantua-maker the second place in her affection, and listened to his quaint rigmarole whenever he addressed her.

“ I spees dis yere leedle gal yam like de Queen ob Sheba, hol’in’ court ’mong de kings ob Jerusalum. But dis chile duzn’t spees Misse Sheba eber hab sich ar snarl ob glory on ’er head ez dis yere leedle queen ob Palm Isle.”

And the aged wizard stroked Morete’s silky hair with his gnarled fingers, verily like some grim old Nereus from the nether world, ascended from the ocean habitat to sanction this human ban with one of his colony of nereids from under-sea.

Abating the radiant expression on her face for a moment, Morete turned from the doctor and greeted her venerable seamstress with a smile, and gracefully proffered one of her little brown hands in token of welcome. It was evident to all that she held these two men in highest esteem, and ever gladdened at their coming, in whatever capacity of servitude they came.

While Morete always received Greville with a very sun-burst of love, the greeting bestowed upon Uncle Joe was more like the filial affection due to a parent. This might possibly be accounted for by Joe Bailey’s awakening some dim retrospect of her remote aqueous history — for a more Neptuncean visage was never beheld on sea or land.

“Well, Uncle Joe, I don’t know which Morete loves best, you or the doctor,” said the mate, interrupting the pantomimic tattle of the pair. “She evidently thinks you are the handsomest man of the two. Guess if you could deduct a hundred years from your countless centuries, you’d win the day.”

“Lorry me, Misser Braybruc, not much chance fo’ dis yere ole brack brudder whar Docer Grevil yam. Hun’ard year yain’t much to’ard dat, sah. I spees dis chile be purty ole ebony eben den.”

“Of course you’ll put out a shingle — ‘Fashionable Dress-maker’ — when you retire from whaling?” queried Morey.

“Doan kno’ ’bout dat, sah. Dis pussun neber sarve reg’lar time makin’ gowns fo’ de gals. Spees de sho’ folks ruther want mo’ style dan leedle Misse ’Rete. Tink dis niggas mo’ ’dapted ter cut er taup’sil, dan er gal’s Mudder Ubard.”

If Morete did not fully comprehend all that was said about her, she realized that she was the topic of conversation, and responded to the extra sunbeams in the black face above her with a warmth that was most gratifying to the old whaleman.

There was one person on board in whose presence Morete ever showed something of her old frenzy and fear. Crawford came aft while Mr. Bailey was having the last of his pleasant chat, and had not Morete been securely tethered to the doctor, at Tom’s first appearance, it was feared she might have leaped overboard to avoid the big brute who once

lassoed her. Even when in the cabin, Tom's deep sonorous voice filled her with apprehension, until Captain Lawrence was forced to command the burly fellow to keep quiet whenever he came aft.

Each surreptitious contact which Tom thus obtained of the little sea-girl but served to increase his regrets that he was not the lucky fellow to have captured the pretty creature for Barnum. Of this, Tom often complained to the crew. "Yer see, mates," he is reported to have said to his shipmates, "it am not so muchly ther thousand doller in gold, what ther grate showman promis ter gin me, but ole Tom would ha' bin considered ar grate nat'ralist. Then ther papers h'ist ar feller's name inter notie' wid sum kind o' jimerack towin' astarn on't. An' Barnum would hev trotted out ar life ticket fur ar feller ter seen all ther horned 'orses an' land varmints."

"Yis, yis, b'ys, Tom's allus shapin' his course fur ar free ticket," responded Buntline. "Ole Belzebub gin him ar free pass long ago, ez we all know. Sorry ter sez it again' me ole chum, but it's my 'pinion thet ole Physic wul do bettermore by ther Marmaid than Tom wul."

"Brail up ther, Bunt! Ye's allus takin' sum onsartin view uv ar feller's Christin piety. I hole thet all sea-goin' critters wuz born ter be captur'd. Ther nat'ral end on um is ter stuff um wid tan-bark, fur ther good o' futer gin'rations. An' I mean ter lend ar helpin' hand in tuckin' um."

“ Bully fur you, Tom ! Stick ter thet gawspil. You hez allus done so much good fur 'cience thet you'll git stuffed yerself, sum day. But, ole chum, ther paddin' wul be brimstone 'sted o' tan-bark ; an' jist one touch uv ar lucifer wul set yer ar flamin'.”

The night was setting in dark and lowery. As it was threatening to become squally, the evening sociable was broken up early, and the doctor was compelled to escort the lady passenger below to her stateroom for the night. Though the little miss showed some reluctance to going, Greville was gradually acquiring sufficient restraint over her, so that her moments of rebellion daily became less frequent.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A NIGHT OF DANGER.

THE Fleetwing steered to the N. W. for several days after leaving the Pelews, until the thermometer showed that she had entered the Kuro-Siwo, the warm, Indian stream which runs along the western shores of the Pacific. A small part of this stream flows through Behring Strait into the Arctic, while the larger part runs east along the south shore of Alaska and the coast of Oregon.

Along the eastern coast of Luzon and Formosa, the Kuro-Siwo, or Black Stream, has a velocity of three knots an hour to the N. This ocean river originates in the tropics, and corresponds to the American Gulf Stream, though its waters are a deeper green and have a somewhat lower temperature. The Kuro-Siwo greatly modifies the climate of Japan, as the stream divides and runs both sides of the islands; the western branch enters the Corea Strait and passes out of the Japan Sea at the Sanger Strait.

After striking this ocean current the Fleetwing

was brought up to the wind, the yards braced and the studding-sails taken in, with the view of making the Bashee channel before entering the China Sea. This new course brought the ship's head N. by W., when on a taut bowline. While a ship is increasing her latitude in the N. E. trades, the wind always backens round to the north-east as she advances. A few days' sailing in this favoring current sufficed to run out the required latitude, then the ship was kept away to the west.

It would have been a more direct course to Hong Kong had the ship entered the China Sea north of Luzon; but by so doing the vessel would have been headed by a south-setting current, coming down from the Yellow Sea, between Formosa and the coast. But now, when she was kept off to the west, to run out her longitude, she would cross the China current at right angles and in its narrowest part.

Ten days had passed since the Fleetwing left the Isle of Palms. When the noon observations were taken the ship was found to have reached latitude $20^{\circ} 10' N.$, the exact latitude of the Bashee channel. The yards were squared in and the ship was kept off west, while the studding-sails were put upon her, alow and aloft, with the hope of making the N. Bashee island before dark.

The wind increased steadily during the afternoon, and long before night the studding-sails had to be taken in and the skysail and royals furled. Later on the weather set in black and squally, and sail had

to be further reduced. Though it piped on to a gale, and threatened to be a disagreeable night, still the ship was pressed to her utmost, with a determination to make the land if possible.

The channel for which they were running is a dangerous place for night-work. Thirty miles north of the Bashee is Gadd's reef, and just beyond is Botel Tobago. To the west of these dangers, and more in mid-channel, are the dread Vele-Rete rocks, just a-wash in a seaway. Thus the alternative of making the land or isolated rocks and reefs in a dark night, with a large sea running, was not pleasant to contemplate.

This is one of the many emergencies frequently thrust upon a ship-master; situations that require a degree of nerve and sound judgment not often available in time of need. The ship's position was discussed at supper table. As Captain Lawrence said, — "We are in the vicinity of two opposite currents. The Bashee channel is good enough by daylight, in any weather, but bad for night-work in the best of weather. The north point of the island, for which we are steering, — so as to learn when we are past all danger, — has rocks some distance out. But it is always safer to approach the Bashee than any of the clusters of rocks which border the north side of the channel. This is our position; what do you think of it?"

"Suppose we shorten sail and heave-to for the night," suggested the mate.

“We should have to drift before the sea, without knowing which of the several currents we were at the mercy of. We know where we are now; and in three hours’ time our distance will be run out. We shall then be *on* the Bashee, or past it and in safety. I hold to taking a risk for three hours, rather than for the whole night.”

The three officers agreed with the captain, and his decision was made to run as they were going and do their best to keep off the land. Night shut down early, and every precaution was taken to avoid the coming danger. In addition to the double lookouts on the bows, a sharp-eyed man was put upon the end of the flying jib-boom, and another in the stay-sail netting to pass along the word.

As the gale was momentarily increasing, sail must be snugged down so that the ship could luff about on either tack, as required, in the coming emergency. Old Tom was called to the helm. One watch was stationed at the braces, fore-and-aft, ready to cant the yards on the instant; the other watch was sent aloft to furl the topgallant-sails. Then the three topsails were to be single reefed, — one sail at a time, — not to abate the ship’s speed, or place her in irons, in case of need. After the topsails were reefed and hoisted, the fore and main sails were brailed up and left to hang in the buntlines. This would give more freedom in bracing the yards, and permitted the captain to see ahead from the quarter-deck.

Nine o’clock came, the time required to run out

the supposed distance to the Bashee, and there was no appearance of land. The darkness had become blacker than Egypt, and nothing could possibly be distinguished but the ghastly sea-caps against the inky blackness of sea and sky.

The wind now hauled two points more, adding greatly to the danger of the situation if the ship should need to be luffed out to the N. Uncle Joe had been kneeling at the taffrail in earnest prayer. When it was announced that the wind had shifted to the N. N. E., the old man rose up out of the darkness and went quickly to the captain, who was standing by the binnacle prompting Crawford to be ready for the word from the lookout, for it must now come soon.

“What be yo’ reck’nin’ now, sah?” he asked of the captain.

“My distance will be over-run inside of ten minutes. What is your calculation?”

“Ef de gude Lawd permits, we uns wul pass de Bashee in two minit, sah. Pray de deah Fader to hole us in his han’ now, Cap’n.”

“What do you remember about this N. Bashee?”

“Nasty p’int, sah! Plenty ob rocks all ’bout dere, Cap’n. On’y queek work an’ ar handy ship can sabe us if we make dem yere rocks.”

“Go forward, Mr. Bailey, and quietly tell the mate that our reckoning is about run out, and to double his lookouts; and let him remember that his sign for lee-bow breakers is one pistol-flash.”

“Yi, yi, sah. An’ ef yo’ can spare dis nigger, I’d like ter hole de larboard year out t’ward dat ar lan’, an’ hark’n wid de sole, jis one minit.”

“All right.” Turning to the helmsman, who had heard the conversation and appreciated the crisis, the captain bade him, “Be ready with a quick lee-helm, Tom.”

“Ay, ay, sir. I bin feelin’ uv ’er luff, of’en.”

Hailing the seamen stationed at the braces, the intuitive commander seemed verily to feel the near approach of the danger, though it was invisible, and he bade them, “Be alert there, every man of you! Cast off your lee braces and trail them along forward for a quick run!”

“Ay, ay, sir. Lee braces cast off ready for a run,” answered a dozen sonorous voices from out the blinding darkness.

“Mr. Morey, who are tending the weather braces?” The second mate named the two best boatsteerers, which seemed to satisfy the captain as he gave the final order while breathlessly waiting the dreadful emergency, “Lessen the turns on the pins ready to let go!”

“Ay, ay, sir. Lessen the turns it is,” was answered from out the gloom, as the ship tore through the black night and the swirling seas.

Though the ship was steering to make the north point of the Bashee, yet the swift-flowing northerly current across which she was running made it possible for her to be far out in mid-channel, thirty miles

further north than was estimated. In this case she might run upon Gadd's reef, or the Vele-Rete rocks, — much the more dangerous position of the two, — for with such a large sea running against a strong cross-current, it were impossible to distinguish the surf on the reefs from the foaming swash of the combing billows.

The sense of apprehension was becoming most oppressive to those in command. Every soul on board was standing breathless, half suffocated with intense anxiety of the situation. Still the ship tore on and on through the inky blackness, until most of the officers believed that she had passed the island. So great was the nervous strain upon Captain Lawrence, upon whom all responsibility rested, that he could not bring himself to run a moment longer upon this hap-hazard course. He quietly ordered Tom to ease his helm, and luff her slowly to the N. W., and bade Mr. Morey brace the yards for a beam wind, — doing this at a venture, as one might grope his way through the darkness toward a precipice, until the aroused monitress within was repelled from going farther in that direction.

Suddenly, while the ship was in the act of luffing into the onrolling seas, Uncle Joe's piercing fife-notes were heard above the shouting voices of the forward lookouts :

“ Lan' O, close aboard ! Ha-r-r-d a-lee ! ”

The mate's pistol shot confirmed the old man's cry. Fortunately the ship had already luffed so as

to head along the trend of the land, before she entered the verge of the breakers. This saved her from striking upon the rocks before she could have answered the helm; for not only the rocks but land was in full view. As it was, the laboring ship was grappled for a full minute by the wild swirl of roaring surf and the onrolling seas, and but for the grip of the favoring current she would have been cast broadside upon the sharp rocks and pyramids of foam which now floundered only a ship's length away under the quarter. Not until her courses were set, and after five minutes of sailing to the N. W., was there a certainty of the ship's freeing herself. Then the rocks and the seething breakers began to slowly recede into the darkness, and one and all breathed easily again.

The ship's course and distance had been calculated with terrible precision. She had approached the island at the very spot desired, but so near was the land that, as old Tom said, "It scotched ther hair on me old bald 'ead!" But then, sailors consider "a miss as good as a mile."

The Fleetwing had now derived a good "departure," and her course was laid W. N. W. for Pedro Branco, four hundred miles distant, where plenty of Hong Kong pilots would be found on the lookout for inward-vessels. As the gale was still piping loudly, another reef was taken in the fore and mizzen topsails and the ship was kept at her topmost speed the remainder of the night.

One would suppose that after hours of such intense anxiety there would not be much sleep for any one on board. On the contrary, in less than half an hour most of those having the privilege of a watch below had snatched a whiff at their interminable pipes, and were snoring in concert with the gale above deck.

Mr. Bailey had charge of the middle watch, and to him Captain Lawrence gave his orders for the remainder of the night, well knowing that the aged officer would use the best judgment in battling with the gale. In relating the singular circumstance of his discovering the land before the other lookout, he said :

“Yo’ seed, chilun, dis niggarr yam gittin’ so ole dat he can see best wid de ears on sich niggarrish nites as dis yere. Dis chile stay’d aft jess ez long ez he could. Dese yere ole bones gut chuck full ob Moses, an’ I axed de cap’n lemme go fo’ard ; den I shinned out onter de bow an’ gan ter luke fo’ de lan’, but suffin said, ‘Go funder out, ole man.’ It wuz tuff work fo’ dese crooked ole walkers ter tote out onter dat jib-boom, wid de ship scootin’ ’fore de gale an’ pitchin’ her nose un’er water, but de Lawd sed, ‘Push ahead, push ahead, Joe, an’ diskibber dat lan’.’ So I’s done did um, an’ dats how’t wuz.”

“But how’d you see land with your ears ?” queried Chips, who was good at worrying an explanation out of the old officer.

“My stars, Chips, duzn’t yer t’ink dat de sole ob

man can see lan' in de dark? Why, chile, I'se jess leaned de larboard year out to'ard de Bashee, an' ar loud woice in de sole sez, 'Joe, dats lan'! Louden queek, or de ship am ar gorner.' An' 'fore yo' uns bin seed dose breakers I'se louden, an' sabe de ship."

Morning broke bright and clear over the storm-washed vessel. The ship was running free under a full press of sail, steering to make the China coast somewhere in the vicinity of Breakers' Point.

The day was so fine that Greville came on deck with Morete, seeking an hour's airing under the awning as the cabin was becoming oppressive. With the exception of the helmsman the happy pair were alone, and Morete chatted merrily in her pretty patois to her indulgent companion. The doctor had never known his little captive to be so talkative. She was daily making use of newly found words and novel ideas, and just how she obtained them none could guess. Whether she forged the strange idiom in her own mind, or dug it up from the memory of by-gone days, Greville was at a loss to determine.

It was evident to the keen-eyed physician that since Morete recovered from the effect of the Gelsemia her mind held to a better poise than before the poisoning; another valuable therapeutic which ought to prove of great value to the profession in the treatment of insane patients. After days of close scrutiny, Greville determined that there was now no dark, strange, crazy moods afflicting the

little sea-girl, and her recovery was wholly attributed to the medicinal effect of the remedy she had taken.

While the two sat by the taffrail greatly occupied with each other, Prince John, the Tahiti Kanaka, mounted into the starboard boat, of which he was the boatsteerer, and began putting things in order against the ship's arrival in port. John was not yet fully recovered from his terrible wounds inflicted by the mad whale, and this was the first time he had undertaken any kind of ship duty.

This noble Kanaka was a prince of the royal house of Pomare, and had always been a favorite on board ship. John so hated the French after they captured Tahiti, that he abandoned his beautiful home to escape seeing their daily persecution of his people.

The boatsteerer had remained busily employed in his boat for an hour, when suddenly he heard something in the talk of the mermaid which attracted his attention. He sprang up from his seat on the bow thwart, thrust his head in through the mizzen rigging, and while leaning far inboard hailed the doctor, and with a look of surprise declared :

“Why, Doctor, me think that gal be a Kanaka *wahine*! She speak you all the same as Tahiti Kanaka.”

“Do you think so, John?”

“Yes, sir, no mistake 'bout um.”

“Come in here, John, and have a talk with her.”

John dropped down out of the rigging and approached the pair. Morete did not relish the intrusion of this stranger, coming to interrupt her hilarious time with the doctor, and she shrank timidly away, with no disposition to be interviewed. The Kanaka drew near and took a seat by her side; after an exchange of greetings in the native tongue, the two fell into a conversation full of surprise and interest to all concerned :

“ *Aloha! wahine.* ” — Love to you, girl.

“ *Aloha! kane.* ” — Love to you, man.

“ *Owai oe?* ” — Who are you?

“ *Morete, ke wahine no Pomare.* ” — The daughter of Pomare.

We will drop the native language and give an interpretation of what transpired.

“ Morete, how came you on the island? ”

“ I came in my little canoe and was wrecked in a storm. ”

“ When did you leave Tahiti? ”

“ I don't know. But it was long, long ago, when I was a little girl. ”

“ What did you leave home for? ”

“ I was married to the Sea King. He came one moonlight night and took me away in his chariot, down under the sea, where I lived happily many years. Then the king went away and I lost him. I took my canoe and went in search of him, and was wrecked on the island. ”

Having gleaned this much from the girl in corrob-

oration of his own recollections of the affair, John proceeded to relate the story of Morete's love and disappearance from Tahiti.

“ I remember when the English man-of-war Hector came to anchor at Tahiti. It was about twelve years ago. She was in port between three and four months, then went away and did not return as some of the officers promised she would. The officers and crew were ashore, watch-and-watch, much of the time. A pretty little midshipman named Eddie Le Roy was often in the company of my cousins, Morete and Marau. Eddie loved Morete, who was then but ten years old ; and she idolized him, and induced me to carry fruit and flowers to the cockpit for Eddie almost every day.

“ The day the ship sailed I heard Eddie repeatedly promise to return and be married to Morete. Mr. Brander, the American consul, had married her oldest sister ; but Eddie never came back. Probably he was not allowed to leave the ship, as he was a nobleman, and under the guardianship of the captain. And perhaps he outgrew his ardent affection for the little Tahiti princess.

“ Morete mourned the loss of her lover until she was deprived of her reason, — a mild kind of insanity, which after a while changed into a strange kind of delusion. She repeatedly told us that Lord Le Roy had become King of the Sea. She talked of seeing him daily out in the surf, and spent many a moonlight night with the king, sitting on the shore

at the mouth of the river which runs past our door. She declared that Eddie was always with her when she swam in the surf, and that they had loving times together.

“This crazy mood was kept up for two years. The girl’s story about her lover varied from time to time. The last version was that Eddie had been made King of the Sea, and was building her a beautiful palace of shells, and red and white coral. When the palace was finished, he would come for Morete and take her away in his pretty chariot, drawn by dolphins; with numerous mermaid attendants to wait upon her under the sea, where she was to live forever.

“She disappeared one moonlight night, she and her frail little canoe, and nevermore was seen, though the shores of the whole group were searched by five hundred canoes. She was such a perfect swimmer, that it was a long time before we could give her up as lost. But at length some of the taboo priests reported that her spirit was nightly seen sporting on the surf, when the moon was large and bright. After that, no one doubted that she was dead.”

Morete had listened with tremulous interest to Prince John’s story about herself. Little by little a ray of mental light streamed into the dead, blank past, in which she had existed. Suddenly she turned to the doctor and twined her arms tightly about him, and exclaimed in a voice of delight :

“*Auwe, Docer!* Be you my Eddie, come to take

Morete home to Tahiti?" With tears in his eyes, Greville answered the little maiden :

" Yes, you darling girl. I will take you to Tahiti if you wish. But would it not be best to go to my home first? I may not take the place of your lost King of the Sea, but I will be to you more than Lord Eddie Le Roy, who won your love, and went away and left you to mourn. Morete, I love you dearly, and will be to you all that man can be to the woman he loves. Darling, must you go home to Tahiti? Or will you find a home with me, wherever we chance to abide?"

And the ardent man held the fair girl aloof—at arm's length—to read the sudden answer in her eyes, as she could not find words to speak, and could only bury her face on Greville's breast, and sob out her unspeakable joy. That evening Captain Lawrence was called upon to perform the marriage ceremony, in the presence of the officers and crew, — that being among the many functions of a ship-master.

Uncle Joe gave the beautiful bride away, and claimed the first kiss from the charming young wife, — a kiss which was most willingly given, and often repeated in the coming days of the homeward voyage, for the dear old soul had been as a loving parent to Morete from the first moment of their meeting.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ATTACKED BY PIRATES.

LATE in the afternoon of the second day from the Bashee, the mast-head lookouts raised the China coast, and the ship ran in off Breakers' Point before keeping away to the west. Following the trend of the coast, Pedro Branco was reached before night. When the Fleetwing drew near this Sail Rock, as it is also called, many native vessels were discovered near in to the tall white pinnacle; there the wind dropped away to a light, whole-sail breeze, and all the light sails were set.

At least twenty obsequious Chinese pilots bore away to head off the Fleetwing, all eager for the job of piloting the vessel into Hong Kong. Their craft were of the sampan style of boats, having two masts, with lateen-sails, and they were also pulled by oars. As one after another of the pilots headed the ship and ran alongside within speaking distance, they each sought to drive a sharp bargain to take the vessel into Hong Kong. Captain Lawrence sat in his quarter boat, and without slacking the speed

of the ship he endeavored to select a suitable pilot from among these almond-eyed Celestials, none of whom seemed to be prepossessing or trustworthy.

He finally made choice of the fifteenth applicant, a tall, raw-boned coolie, who came aboard with two of his crew, leaving the sampan under charge of his wife, to follow on at her leisure. The ship's course was laid for the Nine Pins, for the purpose of entering by the Tathong channel. After night set in, as it became smoky and dismal, it was deemed best to shorten sail, so as not to approach the Waglan rocks before morning. The light sails were furled, the courses were brailed up, and the ship was kept easily along in charge of the usual night watches.

For several years prior to the Fleetwing's voyage, which occurred forty years ago, the Chinese government, both imperial and provincial, had become most despotic and tyrannical. The emperor, Taou-Kwang, was a weak, vain-minded man, wholly given up to debauchery; while the governors of the coast provinces seemed to pattern after their imperial master in the matter of misrule, giving rise to constant rebellions throughout their domain.

In consequence of these insurrectionary times the coast pirates and river robbers had become more numerous and bold than ever before in the history of the Empire. The sea pirates were so fearless and well armed as to attack vessels of all sizes, and they often concentrated in fleets of sufficient power to sack a town.

Knowing this prevailing disposition for marauding on the China coast, the captain had previously ordered the muskets, swivel guns and their one six-pound cannon to be cleaned and made ready for use, while the ship was making passage from the Pelews. Cartridges were made; grape-shot and a few shrapnel shells were got ready for the cannon. Buck-shot was prepared for the muskets, and handles were fitted to a number of extra cutting spades, these broad-edged instruments being the best possible weapons for repelling boarders.

Before reaching the China coast the officers were instructed to impress the crew with the importance of not divulging to strangers that there was treasure on board. But in spite of all these precautions, some time during the middle and morning watches the suspicions of the officers were aroused by seeing the pilot's coolies burning blue lights over the bow and stern of the ship. Even when forbidden to make these signals they slyly continued to do it, stoutly protesting their innocence, and assuming to be burning incense to "Chin chin, Joss!" — saying "How-de-do," to their pagan gods.

As the coolies did not desist after repeated orders, Mr. Morey sent them below, and sternly notified the pilot that if he was caught burning blue lights he should be thrown overboard on the instant. But the mischief had probably been done, and the whole coast was already informed that a rich prize was in the offing; for early in the morning watch the

lookouts began to observe many mysterious appearances.

Blue and red lights were now being exchanged in several directions about the Fleetwing. At first the flashing signals were only dimly seen through the thin mist lying low upon the starlit water, but the lights continued nearing the ever-changing position of the ship, which showed that the Fleetwing was the central point of attraction.

This event caused so much uneasiness that early in the morning watch Captain Lawrence was called out to decide for himself what it all meant. After he had observed the signals for half an hour, he ordered all hands to be quietly called out, the ship's whole armament to be got ready, and the muskets and cannon loaded for the reception of the intruders.

In the misty offing to windward, between the ship and the coast, there were plainly seen the shadowy outlines of three large, schooner-rigged "fast boats," hovering in a cluster and keeping exact pace with the ship by hoisting or lowering their handy sails. The tall masts, wide-winged lateen-sails and low-setting hulls of the long, snakish looking craft, certified to their being either opium smugglers or the largest class of coast pirates, — synonymous terms, as the occasion required. In either case they were dangerous companions, with their pilfering propensity, for the one kind of craft often turned into the other whenever smuggling ceased to be remunerative.

The three vessels had continued dogging the movements of the Fleetwing for several hours, frequently burning their noiseless blue lights, endeavoring to call others to participate in the contemplated attack. But at length, seeing the night hours were drawing to a close and their opportunity for a night attack must soon be lost, they began to act upon some preconceived plan, by separating and taking a triangular position about the Fleetwing.

What appeared to be the leading vessel remained hovering upon the weather quarter. The other two fast boats spread their utmost sail and forged out ahead of the ship, where one remained; the other pirate quietly worked his way down across the bow, taking a position under the lee beam, and then threw up a red rocket, out in the direction of the windward vessel, evidently to announce his readiness for action. The red rocket was instantly answered by a blue one from the windward leader, who at once ran up his massive lateens and closed in on the ship's weather quarter.

The Fleetwing's crew had already made every preparation to receive the pirates. Some four dozen muskets had been heavily loaded with buck-shot, and distributed among the crew and officers. Each man was given an extra charge in case of need. The cutting spades and lances were all placed in readiness for repelling boarders. The crew had been previously divided into three fighting gangs; one gang each for the bow, the stern and the lee-

waist, for it was evident that the three pirate vessels designed boarding at three points at once.

Captain Lawrence assumed charge of the quarter-deck gang, with Mr. Bailey in immediate command of the men ; for although Uncle Joe was a dear good Christian, he would transact business with a pirate much after his method of managing a fighting whale. In his earlier voyages the old veteran had several times fought the Malay and Brazilian freebooters, and though he would not kill a fly, he rather felt it was his life-mission to spade the flukes of all evil-doers.

A swivel cannon was mounted upon the monkey rail of each quarter, and the six-pound deck cannon was loaded with cooper's rivets and planted just forward of the cabin, in case the swarming pirates should gain possession of the forward deck.

Braybrook had charge of the forward gang, having the fourth mate as his second in command. Mr. Morey had command of the midship seamen, assisted by Dr. Greville, who had a brace of navy revolvers in his belt and a cutlass by his side, and looked a trifle eager to perform a summary post mortem upon a few Chinamen by way of illustrating his professional skill.

Some time after the ship's preparations had been completed, seeing that the pirates delayed their attack, the mate suggested getting up a lot of cobble-stone ballast from the forepeak, and ranging the stones along the planksheer and lee rail, to be

used after firing the first volley of musketry. The seamen had been instructed to each cover his man with a musket and await the word to fire. After firing, they were told to hurl down the big stones as fast as possible upon the mass of heads below; but if the pirates succeeded in boarding, they were to depend upon the spades and lances to repel boarders.

The pilot was kept at his post to the last under guard of Tom Crawford, who was armed with cutlass and revolver, but as soon as the pirates fairly gained their positions, Tom was ordered to put the pilot down the booby-hatch. Doughnut, the spirited little cabin-boy, was put to guard the steerage scuttle, with orders to shoot the Chinamen should they attempt to come up after the fight commenced.

The ship had now got along so near to the Nine Pins that the lookouts momentarily expected to see the Waglan rocks, the eastern-most point of the rocky ledge. The leading pirate had now approached the Fleetwing within twice his own length. He came silently on, like a swift-winged bird, keeping close in upon the weather quarter.

While this was going on to windward, the vessel out ahead had gradually lowered her sails—one yard after another—and dropped back under the lee-bow of the ship, approaching only as fast as the leader could gain a position on the quarter of the Fleetwing. The lee-beam fellow had only to spring his luff, little by little, to time his approach to the others, so that all could board together.

The stern pirate began now to forereach upon the quarter of the ship. Not a man aboard the Fleetwing had yet shown himself to warn the pirates of the reception awaiting them; all had kept hidden behind the high bulwarks to make the surprise complete for their assailants. It was a moment of breathless suspense when the lee-beam pirate was seen lighting the fuse of his terrible fire ball, which was designed to cast on board at the last moment, — an admirable method of clearing a space on the deck of the assailed previous to boarding.

But Tom Crawford stood ready with a wet blanket in his big arms, prepared to “Dandle thet babby,” as he expressed it; for the Nantucket veteran had fought pirates in the China Sea before and handled fire balls on like occasions. The decks of the three pirates were seen swarming with men, each with more than a hundred armed ruffians, ravenous as wolves for a fight.

Almost at the last moment Braybrook conceived the idea of running down the forward fast boat as she dropped incautiously under the lee-bow, having reduced her sail too much to be able to sheer off in time. A signal was agreed upon for suddenly putting up the helm at the right moment.

When the light of the fire ball began to flicker against the misty night, the leading pirate bore quickly down upon the weather quarter and flung his grapnels into the mizzen chains. Held fast by these to the ship, the forward sail was let run, falling in a

heap on the quarter boat, so as to completely shield those climbing up the side of the ship.

At the same moment the bow of the lee-beam pirate was heard grating against the waist, as he made ready to cast aboard his well-lighted Greek fire, and the hundred throats of the pirates were yelling like a thousand demons; but the mate had previously made his signal to "Hard up the helm!" and then shouted, "Let go the spanker! Let fly the main-sheet!" orders that turned the whole current of events. Either the foot of the flopping mainsail or its slatting sheet, struck the sputtering fire ball, then burning full blast, and hurled it back upon the yelling villains below. It fell among a crowd so dense that the pirates could neither escape its flying particles, nor get it overboard until many of their number were burned to death, and others were heard shrieking with pain.

This uproar added to the panic of the bow pirates when they beheld the swift ship swinging off till her stem struck them squarely amidships, cutting their light-built craft asunder at the first onset. The mate's plan had worked to a charm. The order had been given to fire just before the ship struck the pirate. The mad howl and savage imprecations rose above the volley of musketry, as twenty guns belched forth their leaden hail down among the miscreants forward and amidships.

But there are always good fighting men among such a crew of demons,—men to rise above all

danger and emerge from any difficulty, and strike a few fierce blows in revenge for thus being outwitted. From the sinking vessel fully fifty armed pirates leaped upon the ship. At least thirty sprang upon the forward guys and martingale, or climbed up the bobstays, while other twenty reached the fore channel from the stern of the sinking fast boat.

But the twelve active sailors followed the example of their fighting mate, — a man all steel and whalebone, — who flashed in a free fight like a meteor in the sky. The fifty tigerish pirates were quickly taught the efficacy of sharp cutting spades at the end of a twenty-foot pole. These cut down all guard, and lopped off the heads of the climbing villains before many of them were near enough to strike a blow. Another class were those who, seeing the day was against them, flung away their arms and begged for mercy. About a dozen of these were pulled on board by their pigtails and thrust down into the forecabin under guard.

Though the lee-beam pirates were surprised by the singular mishap of the fire ball, they were perhaps more confused by seeing their forward companion sunk at a blow. And yet they were not wholly disheartened, for the fire ball was got overboard, and soon after more than half a hundred savage pirates were climbing into the main chains, to be met by the spade slashes of the crew. About thirty succeeded in getting on board at different

times. Braybrook's forward gang had finished their task, and were just in the nick of time to take these midship assailants in the rear, as they were hard pressing the few unwounded men of the second mate's gang.

The fight was going the worst of all with Captain Lawrence. His men had discharged their full volley with good effect as the pirates grappled with the mizzen channel and began climbing up the forward mast to the quarter-deck. The crew had also tumbled down their cobble-stones with good success upon the mass of heads below, killing and wounding many of the pirates, who were amazed at this new warfare.

But the stones soon came to an end, and apparently all their efforts had been to no purpose, for where they had killed ten, twenty more seemed to rise in their places, and on they came, scaling up the ship's quarter like a swarm of infuriated hornets.

This cunning Chinaman had at first let his forward sail run down upon the quarter boat, which served as a covering to hide his bow from view of the ship's people, and as the means of climbing on board. This mast and sail, with its numerous bamboo yards, soon swarmed with climbing pirates scaling the quarter of the ship. This was an emergency calling for the starboard swivel gun, and Joe Bailey was on hand for the occasion. Depressing the muzzle of the cannon until it trained fairly down upon the boarders in the act of springing aboard, Bailey applied the

torch to the spiteful thing and fired, hurling the whole swarm of ascending pirates into eternity.

While the captain's attention was wholly taken up with the fight at the mizzen chains, all unnoticed the pirate chief hauled his vessel forward half her length, till his after mast touched the taffrail. Then suddenly thirty of the fierce barbarians leaped over the stern, led by their gigantic chief, and stood arrayed, cutlass in hand, outnumbering Lawrence's little band nearly three to one.

Only Lawrence and two of his boatsteerers had cutlasses with which to meet the miscreants, but Bailey and the eight seamen had formidable weapons in their long-handled spades. It required but an instant for Lawrence to concentrate the attention of his men upon the new assailants, who stood confronting them in full possession of the stern.

Placing himself at the head of his men, Lawrence called upon them to follow, and fight now, for their lives were at stake. Meeting the pirates, Lawrence made a slash with his cutlass at their herculean leader, whose ponderous two-handed sword was in the air in the act of descending upon the captain's head. At that instant Uncle Joe let fly his broad-bladed cutting spade from the rear, and slashed off the chieftain's head at a blow, mortally wounding two other big pirates in the rear.

So clean-cut was the blow from Bailey's instrument that the headless pirate stood firm as in life, and delivered a crushing blow with his weighty

weapon, burying his keen steel deep into the captain's shoulder till he staggered back against the cabin and fell upon the tool-chest, blinded and unconscious for a few minutes, and all supposed him to be dead.

Recovering from this death-like swoon Lawrence saw that his few remaining men were being hard-pressed and must soon succumb. Nerved to the utmost desperation, the wounded man aroused himself till he succeeded in drawing one of his revolvers, and blazed away among the foremost fighters, doing great execution. While in the act of drawing his second revolver two gigantic pirates sprang at him with raised cutlasses, determined to stop his deadly fire; a fortunate bullet from the timely pistol sufficed for each assailant, and they fell dead; one of them came crashing down upon the wounded man so as to encumber him for a time.

More than half of the captain's men were now dead or wounded, and the pirates remained two to their one. Including Uncle Joe, there were now but five of the Fleetwing's men gathered about their prostrate captain, whose revolvers were empty, leaving him defenceless and at the mercy of the foe, so that there was but little chance of resisting the next onset of the pirates.

In this desperate strait Braybrook made his appearance, followed by every unwounded man in the ship. Then the cutting and slashing became more equal as the pirates rushed in for their last

onslaught. But they were met in the fierce *melée* by such brawny fellows as Tom Crawford, 'Tucket and huge old Ben, two of whom had been in such desperate fights before. It was not long before every pirate on the quarter-deck was cut down, though they were large, picked men, the chieftain's body-guard; men worthy of such a leader, for not one sought to retreat, and all fought bravely till they fell.

The pirate vessel had been cut loose from her grapnel, and had dropped astern and drifted to the lee-quarter. Her men were seen hoisting their tattered sails, seeking to get clear of the ship before they could be attacked. Uncle Joe, quick to think in such an emergency, sprang over to the lee-quarter swivel gun, trained it quickly and fired. Judging by the yells and groans that followed, the little cannon had done its duty, and the saintly old fighter so expressed it.

“Dar, go 'long wid yo', yer pesky varmints. Doan go fo' ter cut out yer flukes roun' heah no mo'. Dat'll do fo' um, chilun. Dem yar yellar fellars dun-no no better. We's Christian brudders, we yam, so wez furgiv' all dese de'd niggars, an' jes make horse-pieces ob de next lot.”

It was an excusable glorification of a terribly soft-hearted fighter, willing to kill an evil-doer, but seeking to tuck him into heaven after he was slaughtered.

Every soul of the captain's original fighting gang

but Mr. Bailey was badly wounded, and nearly half of them dead. The doctor was severely cut up, and it remained for Braybrook and Uncle Joe to dress the wounds as best they could. Both of them wished to attend to the captain first, but he bade them leave him till the last, calling upon the steward for a glass of water, and a wet bandage for his confused and aching head.

Thirty-two dead pirates lay upon the quarter-deck, besides twenty-eight corpse in the waist and about the bows, and probably more than a hundred others had been killed in various ways during the attack, besides those drowned in the sunken fast boat. There were ten prisoners in the fore-castle whom the mate had rescued from the sinking vessel, and not ten unwounded men left in the ship after the sickening slaughter. But the ship was saved from the rapacious villains, and God was to be praised for his providential care, as it was a miracle that one was left alive to tell the tale.

The pilot and his crew were called up and the frightened pilot was put to his duty, though with many misgivings whether he were true man or false, which was yet to be settled. The sixty dead pirates were piled up in a heap in the lee-scutters, and covered over with an old sail; the gore was washed from the deck by the steward, cabin-boy and two coolies.

The gigantic chieftain was laid out by himself, with the purpose of learning if the Hong Kong

authorities could not distinguish who he was, for he appeared like a mandarin of great rank. His followers were certainly very devoted to him, — showing the adulation bestowed upon a god, — and many of his men lost their lives while trying to return his body to their own vessel. His headless trunk was a model of herculean symmetry. The joyous smile lingering upon his gory lips impressed all with the conviction that he loved the smoke of battle for the pleasure it gave. It seemed a pity that such a leader, such a superb type of muscularity and courage, could not have found more befitting employment for his capacity to command.

By the time the wounded were fairly cared for, daylight broke upon the scene. Captain Lawrence then suggested to the mate to call up the prisoners, one by one, and question them about their motive for attacking the Fleetwing. Most of them were sulky, and unwilling or unable to enlighten the mate. A few, who had acquired a smattering of “pigeon English,” testified that the leader of their vessel had, “Speake me, Mellican shipe habe too muche boxe gole.”

This reply made it certain that some one on board had signaled the pirates to the above effect. Upon this information the captain ordered the pilot and his crew to be put in irons, and secured by a chain down the main hatchway, and a signal was set for another pilot.

In the excitement of seizing the pilot’s gang, the

mast-head lookout called out that the Nine Pins were in sight, over the fog, and half an hour after the Waglan rocks emerged from the dissolving mist.

The ship was put to her course, with the design to ran in without a pilot, if none offered, as there was great need of surgical care for the captain, doctor, and a half dozen other severe cases among the boat-steerers and seamen.

As the ship ran into the Tathong channel—the straits between Hong Kong island and the China coast—the wind freshened with the incoming flood-tide, and quickly dispersed the cold gray mist, so frequently found in these parts.

Before the ship was fairly abreast of Tamtoo island, a small sampan pilot-boat made its appearance, beating up from the Ly Moon pass. Her pilot was found suitable, and soon got on board, without having to check the ship's way. The light sails were then set, and favored by a fresh breeze and a fair flood the Fleetwing soon passed the narrow Ly Moon. The town of Victoria was seen soon after, and the ship ran in to her anchorage, abreast of Kow-loon point, dropping her anchor just inshore of the English flag-ship, seen flying the pennant of a vice-admiral.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ANCHORED IN HONG KONG.

AMONG the thousand eyes gazing upon the graceful Fleetwing when she dropped anchor and let run her sails in Victoria harbor, none could detect a trace of the sanguinary battle that she had just fought against three hundred of the most murderous-minded pirates in the world. Only by the stream of human blood, still running from the after-scutter on the port side, could aught be detected outboard to disclose what had transpired.

But whoever stepped aboard would at once be confronted by twenty wounded men who were more or less injured in body or limbs, showing bandaged legs and arms in slings, not to enumerate the five more severely wounded ones lying below in the steerage berths. This, together with the strong stench of butchery, which could only be likened to the smell of a slaughter-house, would bring one face to face with evidence of a sea-fight.

The smell of cadaver came from the sixty dead Chinamen piled together in the larboard waist under

an old topsail, and seven of the dead crew laid out on the tryworks under cover of a sail. Forward, there was hardly a trace of the murderous work that had transpired ; but about the starboard quarter and around the stern an observing person would discover that the round-house, binnacle, taffrail and quarter boats were splintered and perforated with bullets and badly cut with spade slashes ; for there was fought one of the most terrible hand-to-hand fights against Ching Along's gigantic desperadoes.

As there were not men enough left in condition to furl the sails, the canvas was left hanging in the buntlines and clewlines awaiting assistance from the shore, or aid from some of the several whalers lying in port. It was not long before two boats from the whalers came alongside. Captain Marsh, of the "L. B. Jenney," an old friend of Captain Lawrence, was the first to come aboard ; he was soon followed by Harding of the ship "Saratoga," another life-long friend of the captain. Marsh had got his ship ashore at Guam and was undergoing twenty thousand dollars repairs. Harding was in port for recruits and was fitting for Japan sea.

Captain Lawrence received his callers in his cot, under the awning on top of the cabin. There two cots had been slung for himself and the doctor ; Greville being too severely wounded in the arm, thigh and body to be upon his feet. Both of the wounded officers looked ghastly as death, and each lay with an arm in a sling ; this, however, was no

unusual occurrence for a whaler just in from a cruise. After the greetings, both asked with one voice :

“ Well, old fellow, what’s happened? Struck a fighting whale that was too much for you, ha?”

“ We struck in a school this time, and they came near being too much for us, as you say,” replied the captain. Then turning to the steward, who was in attendance, he bade him call aft one of the men.

“ How’s that, Lawrence?” asked Harding, with a look of surprise; “ I never knew school whales to do so much mischief as all this, for I see a dozen men about deck with bandages and slings.”

“ Gentlemen, I’ll show you the kind of school we got into, in a minute.”

“ Tom Crawford is here, sir,” said the steward.

“ Tom, uncover the dead pirates and let the captains see something of our morning’s work.”

“ Ay, ay, sir!”

“ We’ve had a hard tussle with a big school of these fellows,” continued the captain, as Marsh and Harding walked to the brink of the cabin-deck and looked down.

“ The old Harry!” exclaimed Harding. “ They did try to take you with a vengeance. Plenty of that work going on about here among the merchantmen; but what did the fools expect to find aboard of a whaler?”

“ How were you hurt, Lawrence?” interrupted Marsh. “ By cutlass or bullet? Those fellows poison their weapons sometimes.”

“Oh, mine is a sword-cut, by a dead man!”

“The deuce, and Tom Walker! Why, Lawrence, it has affected your brain already. Better not talk any more, and we’ll have a doctor aboard to see you.”

“My doctor happens to be worse off than I am, and can’t officiate in this case. Dr. Greville, Captains Marsh and Harding”—introducing his friends. “My wound has not been thoroughly examined yet, only slightly dressed by the mate; and I would like one of you to send your boat aboard the admiral for a surgeon; and also see that my sails are furled, as we are too short-handed to do much ship work.”

“Certainly, old boy!” said Harding. “I’ll attend to that matter myself. I know the old covey, well. Seymore is a good fellow and he will be interested in looking after this pirate business.”

“Yes, indeed,” interrupted Marsh, “this fighting of yours should put the naval gang to the blush. Nothing so grand as this since we had our two days’ fight with the Malay pirates off Cockatoo point, in the straits of Sunda, when we were boatsteerers together.”

“Well, I’m off for a doctor. Marsh will look after the sails and such matters.”

Away went the impulsive Harding, soon as his boat could be manned. He was met by a cutter, before he got half way to the man-o’-war, coming in charge of a midshipman, and seeking commercial news.

Several merchants soon after arrived from shore, coming off in the custom house boat, whose officers came on official business. These were followed by the health officer, who, strange to say, left a "clean bill of health," though dead men lay in heaps, and the wounded were everywhere to be seen. But death by stabs and bullet wounds is not deemed disease.

Captain Lawrence had by this time become so weak from talking that he came near fainting. Marsh at once took the command and forbade visitors approaching the cot; and requested Braybrook to attend to all new-comers, give them the news, and send them off with despatch. Up to this time the captain had kept his spirits up by excitement and sheer force of will, now reaction had taken place, and his wound pained him severely.

About half an hour after the admiral's boat was seen coming. Marsh reported that the old veteran was there himself, accompanied by his flag-captain, Walsh, the surgeon and Harding. The steward brought up some chairs from the cabin, and made ready to receive the naval gentlemen. The renewed excitement of their coming had the effect to again nerve Lawrence up to the highest tension.

When the Englishmen arrived alongside, the mate received them at the gangway, and Marsh ushered them up under the awning, where Seymore, Walsh and the surgeon were introduced to the captain. After a brief greeting the admiral ordered the sur-

geon to strip the captain's wound and give it his immediate attention. And the four spectators stood eagerly by, watching the deft, professional handling of the ghastly wound by the brusque old sawbones. It was a sight to sicken the inexperienced in such matters, and all were anxious to hear the surgeon's diagnosis.

"Well, McDonald, what have you to say about this terrible wound?" urged the impatient Seymore.

"It is a frightful gash, sir. I'm thinking that none but a Hercules could have struck such a blow. Captain Lawrence has made much too light of it, altogether. The left clavicle is half cut through, and I wonder at its adhering. The head of the scapula is badly chipped off, and several ligaments about the wound are nearly severed. That is my diagnosis, sir."

"Yes, yes, Mack! But what is your prognosis? Give us the whole story, and don't mince matters."

"Inflammation is sure to supervene, and the fever will run high in this nasty humid climate. A slight blow or wrench would fracture that clavicle, so the patient must be closely watched if he gets out of his head. The gist of the matter is, sir, that nothing but the best attention will prevent pyæmia before healthy recuperation begins."

"How's that? Lawrence is strong and vigorous, and not of a suppurative constitution. What should induce blood-poisoning in a subject of this kind?"

"The nerve-shock has been severe. The blood

has been greatly overheated, as we see by the froth in the wound, and above all else erysipelas is threatened, and pyæmia is likely to follow."

"Well, Doctor, look closely after this case, and your brother physician, as a special favor to me. Send aboard some of your assistant surgeons to take all the other cases in hand." Turning to the captain he said, "You have heard your case fairly stated, Captain Lawrence, and you must be put upon your best behavior. Now I'd like one of your officers to tell us something more about how and where you were attacked, that I may send out a vessel and look the ground over."

"Oh, I will tell you the story myself, Admiral."

"But I am afraid to have you talk too much; erysipelas and blood-poisoning are threatened, you know, Captain."

"Many thanks to the surgeon for showing up the worst side of my case; forewarned forearmed, you know, Doctor. I feel sort of pent up, and must talk or explode." The surgeon who was dressing Greville's wounds shrugged his shoulders at this sort of Yankee gospel.

Lawrence persisted in relating the pirate fight in detail, stopping occasionally to rest, and perhaps contemplating the pyæmia in the pauses. He enlarged mostly upon the bravery of his officers and men. Especially did he astonish his listeners in relating Uncle Joe's wonderful feat of beheading the great chieftain, and mortally wounding two other of

his big fighters at one spade-cut, ending his spirited narrative by saying, "So you see, Admiral, that I did really receive my wound from a *dead man*."

This so aroused the curiosity of the naval commanders that they requested to see the big pirate. Tom was called aft again to uncover the giant and his desperadoes; while the sail was being removed from the dead, Seymore, Walsh and the others stood on the cabin-deck to view them; no sooner was the gigantic pirate exposed to view, and his severed head turned, face to the audience, than Walsh exclaimed, with amazement pictured on his face:

"Bless my soul, Admiral, that's Ching Along, the commodore of the whole coast fleet. Why, Lawrence, my boy, you're entitled to a thousand pounds reward for that fellow's head—that's five thousand dollars of your Yankee money. That pirate was the most inveterate fighter out of Halifax, to say nothing about t'other place."

"Truly, Captain, you've done a fine thing in accomplishing the death of that monster. I've been made nervous many a night thinking of that villain's atrocious deeds, assassinations and kidnapping, done under our very guns," said the admiral.

"Only a week ago," continued Walsh, "his favorite mistress betrayed him up at Canton. There he showed his mettle by killing five officers and two Chinaman, and escaped almost unscathed. He's the same cunning fellow that escaped my five sloops and cutters out off Amoy. We penned in and destroyed

twenty pirate vessels during that cruise. But Ching Along was too smart for us ; he escaped by a miracle. Why, gentlemen, that villain ran my broadside at pistol shot, and we knocked more holes through his fast boat than my sloop had ports. But his handy men had a plug for every shot-hole in no time. Ching Along crossed our stern and took the weather gauge of us, and blame me if he didn't fire his pistol contemptuously at our flag, then take off his hat and bow to us, politely as Johnny Crapeau. Once to the windward of our ships, and he could sail two feet to our one. Give us your well hand, Captain Lawrence, for you have done a big service for us all."

"Yes, indeed," joined in the admiral, "and the reward will be quite a lift for you, quite a lift, sir. It's the very best dressing for your wound that I know of. I shall look to see you out in a few weeks, with that to aid. Five thousand, remember, and I'll admon'sh the authorities to pay it promptly." And the old admiral entered quite into the spirit of the thing, for the big pirate had been a terrible scourge to commerce for years back.

"But, Sir Michael, it was my third mate who did the business for that fellow, and deserves the reward. But for Mr. Bailey's quick work Ching Along would have wiped me out of existence as easily as one destroys a fly."

"Never mind who killed the big villain, you are in command. But where is that meretorious officer? Let me thank him personally for his brave deed.

You are the master, and can dispose of the reward in any way you like."

Mr. Bailey was sent for and came diffidently into the presence of the naval officers, and was presented to Seymore, who thanked him for his brave and novel deed, adding :

"Mr. Bailey, Captain Lawrence gives you the credit of killing Ching Along, and I am surprised that an old person like you could have done such excellent fighting, — yes, excellent is the word, sir, for such a timely blow."

"Weel, sah, I spees yo' doan kno' my cap'n. Him allus gib udder folkes all de credit fo' de gude t'ings. But, Massa Admiral, dis chile look'd ober dose yere de'd lambs arter de butch'ry wuz ober ; an', sah, dis niggars one eye counted seben bull sheep in dat yere flock wid de cap'n's minie-balls in dar gizzard ; 'sides fo' udders dat wuz winged. An' all dat wuz dun, sah, whin de cap'n's larboard flipper hung floppin', like de broken wing ob ar gony."

Tears were seen trickling down the deep gutters in Joe Bailey's black cheeks as he stood gazing into the pale face of his loved commander, — tears that were sufficiently contagious to affect the eyes of the aged admiral, who walked quickly up to the captain's cot and grasped his hand, as he exclaimed :

"By Jove, sir, you deserve to have the command of my best frigate, for this heroism. Hasten your recovery, young man, and come and dine with me

the first moment you are able. You've done a brave act; a great service to the country. And the Queen shall hear of it from my own lips, sir. God save the Queen!” And the old man bared his silvery head, — whether in memory of her Majesty, or the heroic deed; probably from a mixed reverence for nobility, in whatever shape he found it.

“Thank you, Admiral Seymore; I am heartily glad to have met your approbation. But I have done no more than any other ship-master would have done in my place. I accept your invitation with pleasure, and will send word aboard the flag-ship as soon as I am able to be up and about. I appreciate your kindness in bringing the surgeon, and hope you will let some of your doctors attend my seamen, several of whom are badly off. I think my own case will get along nicely now.”

“Certainly, sir, certainly. — Doctor, you and your assistants will please give these cases all the attention required until they fully convalesce.”

“Yes, sir, I shall attend these cases with a good relish,” replied McDonald.

“Now, gentlemen, I must bid you good-day. Keep quiet, Captain, till your wound closes. Uncle Bailey, if I were going into naval action I should like nothing better than to have you there to repel boarders. What do you say to enlisting on board the flag-ship, with a whale-lance and a cutting spade?”

“No, t'ank yer, sah. Dis chile duzn't like de biz'ness. Dose yere po' lambs luke so human arter

dey's de'd, dat I t'ink p'raps de Lawd meant ter make spec'ble pussuns on um. I's feard dis niggarr put in leedle too much rantankerus whin him spade does yallar critters. But, Massa Admiral, dose tarnal willains did luke awful sabage whin dey cum 'board. An' I spec Gawd A'mighty wull furgib de leedle David what killed dat big Goliah."

"Ah, I see, Uncle Bailey, you are one of our Cromwell's terrible Puritans; fellows who pray lustily before and after the battle, but cunning enough to 'keep their powder dry.' — Captain Walsh, we must be going."

"One word more before you go, Admiral," hailed the captain, as the naval officers were about to depart.

"Yes, a dozen if you wish. But I am thinking of sending out a steamer to look over your fighting ground. West by N., I think you said the Nine Pins bore, after the action?"

"About that, sir; and twenty miles distant. Your vessel will find plenty of rubbish where we sunk the bow pirate, if the officer deduct for the drift of the wind, and half the run of a flood tide. But what I wished to say, Sir Michael, to you and the gentlemen present, is that we found a bit of treasure in an old Spanish wreck, at the Isle of Palms."

"Indeed, Captain, glad to hear it. Anything worth mentioning?" said Seymore, as he turned to descend the steps.

“Our smallest estimate of the bullion is about five million dollars.”

“The deuce you have!” And the old officer turned and came back up the stair.

“Yes, and that’s what the pirates were after.”

“Well, well! But then you Yankees are full of surprises. Truly you are a lucky fellow, in more ways than one. You must tell me about this Spanish wreck when you dine aboard.”

“We have ten prisoners from the pirate vessels, and the villainous pilot and two of his crew. What are we to do with them?”

“We could take charge of them if you wish. But perhaps it would be best to hand them over to the shore authorities, as they will have to deal with them.”

“A small squad of marines might be of service, to stand guard while the treasure is on board,” suggested Captain Walsh.

“Yes, if the captain wishes it. But I should say that a few more like that godly old third mate, with cutting spades, could take excellent care of the ship and all on board. Well, good-day once more. Come, Walsh, we will go aboard.”

It was not long before a steam sloop was seen under-weigh and steaming out through the Ly Moon pass, on her way out to the recent scene of action. The sails were now furled, and the ship tidied up, after the litter of chains, tackles and pendants, usual to coming into port. The carpenter was fortunately

able to make the coffins for the dead, securing the blubber-room for his workshop. Captain Harding had proffered his services about the burial, and had gone ashore to secure a lot for the reception of the dead seamen.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

NEITHER Captain Lawrence nor his brave officers realized that they had done such gallant deeds until the naval commanders made so much ado about it. As pirates would never attempt to resist a man-of-war, it follows that naval vessels could never be favored with such an opportunity as was thrust upon this American whaler. The so-called luck of the Fleetwing in this action consisted in her having been well armed, and having a crew and officers thoroughly disciplined for any emergency of storm or battle.

Many whaling crews, after having been inured to whale-fights, have been known to fight their first battle against savages or pirates like well-drilled soldiers. It was the result of their previous discipline, which insured concert of action in time of need, rather than mere adventitious bravery. As far as coolness in battle and fighting pluck go, in testing the quality of courage in man, certainly there was more desperate bravery exhibited in Joe Bailey's

terrible whale-fight with Mocha Dick than in any amount of combat with savage men.

Later in the day some of the shore authorities came off to take charge of the prisoners, and remove the dead pirates for sepulture. When the ship was rid of the prisoners and the dead foreigners, no more boats were allowed alongside, except they brought friends or came upon special business. A morbid curiosity induced thousands of shore people to gather about the Fleetwing, hoping to see the dead pirates and hear about their capture. Many of these people were desperate characters, and could not be allowed on board.

Toward night the English sloop of war returned from her cruise about the scene of the pirate fight. The officers discovered more than a hundred corpse floating about in the litter of wreckage where the bow pirate was sunk: They brought back the forward lateen-sail belonging to the sunken vessel, which was buoyed up by its twenty bamboo yards. Several sweeps, water-casks, hen-coops and other deck fixtures were seen scattered over the sea where the terrible conflict took place. All that could be learned about Ching Along's vessel — which was well known among the coasters — was that she disappeared to the east in the direction of Breakers' Point.

The Fleetwing had arrived in port at an opportune time for financial matters. Some twenty ship-masters were having trouble with the money-lenders

about rates of exchange. A great fraud had been attempted by one of the leading consular houses of the place, and the crisis had reached its acme the day of the ship's arrival. This subject should be thoroughly ventilated for the benefit of mariners who contemplate trading at Hong Kong, as it is a veritable transaction, though long gone by.

In the eastern ports of the Pacific, including Hawaii and Tahiti, it was customary in those years to loan money to ship-masters at so much per cent. exchange; but at Hong Kong, and the neighboring commercial ports, the prevailing method was to make loans at some stipulated rate of discount,—a method not appreciated by borrowers coming from the East.

Wishing to compete with the merchant princes of the port, the great consular house of Blank, Blank & Co. sought to dispose of numerous large loans by offering to lend money at twenty-five per cent. exchange, while the mercantile houses demanded twenty-five per cent. discount. Now, the difference between exchange and discount, at the above loan rate, is one hundred dollars on a thousand. As many of the captains required ten thousand dollars, it will be seen that they could better themselves one thousand dollars by hiring money of the consul.

The agreement with Blank, Blank & Co. was made by different groups of ship-masters at various times. Though it was but a verbal understanding, it was always made before several witnesses. Yet,

after the captains had completed their purchases, accomplished extensive repairs on their ships, and were ready to disburse the promised money to liquidate expenses, they were told that one and all were mistaken about the agreement being for exchange instead of discount.

Feeling that a gross wrong was attempted, the captains had refused to draw a dollar from the consular house. When they applied at the mercantile houses of the place it was found that all were solid for the original rates of discount. It is due to Mr. Blank, senior, to state that he was absent at the time, and this nefarious brokerage was conceived and its perpetration attempted by the junior member of the firm. It may be remarked, *en passant*, that the consulate was about to change hands. The new consul, General K——, had already arrived, but came somewhat ahead of the date of his commission. This fact may disclose another ulterior motive, and show a wish to make their last commercial transaction as remunerative as possible, though it should be accomplished by fraud.

Before night, on the day of the Fleetwing's arrival, it became known that she had millions of treasure to loan. It was the general topic of conversation on Queen Street, and in financial circles was of paramount interest to the terrible pirate fight. Every person in want of money, as well as people having it to loan, flocked off to the ship to inquire the truthfulness of the report, and the rates de-

manded. To these queries the invariable answer was, "Five per cent. less than the ruling rates on shore to-day or at any time hereafter."

The effect of this upon all the leading financiers was most charming. Mr. Blank, junior, had obtained the startling news early in the day by his office runner. Immediately the consular clerks were posted off with perfumed notes to all the outraged captains, stating in polite and mollient language that, "The consul had concluded to accede to Captain E——'s understanding of that loan matter, if the captain will kindly give it his earliest attention, and draw on us at once according to his agreement."

Captains Marsh and Harding were the first to board the Fleetwing and learn the above news. Captain Marsh, who was undergoing an expense of twenty thousand dollars, at once took measures to inform every ship-master in port. He even went so far as to send word by a swift fast-boat to Canton, where several of the captains had gone in search of funds. Consequently, when the little perfumed notes came from the honorable Blank, junior, the honeyed concession proffered by the consul was too late to entrap any one. The tables were beautifully turned upon every usurious financier in port.

Several of the ship-masters related their grievances to Captain Lawrence. Some of their stories were novel enough to be told. Captain Baston, of the ship "Parachute," had contracted indebtedness to the amount of five thousand dollars. To expedite

matters in getting away from port, he cleared his ship at the custom-house, and ordered his mate to beat out through the Ly Moon and anchor; there he would meet the vessel, and thus save one tide.

Having previously ordered all his outstanding accounts brought to his consignee, Mr. Wm. Emery, —the English merchant,—he there met his tailor, butcher, market-man, washer-woman and dozens of other importunate tradespeople, looked over their bills, and “accepted” all on the face of them. Then, at the earliest office hours, Baston ascended the hill to the consulate to draw his money, and sign the three usual bills of exchange to liquidate his debt with Mr. Blank.

Imagine the surprise and indignation of this honest seafarer when told that he was mistaken about there being such an agreement, and a demand of five hundred dollars additional charge was made before he could obtain the money required. Refusing to comply with such a usurious demand, he returned to his consignee, met his eager creditors, and explained the situation.

The captain’s explanation was not accepted with good grace. Most of the suspicious Chinamen believed that it was a case of trying to pay bills “under the fore-topsail,” —a nautical way in which fore-castle Jack frequently pays his bills when leaving port.

Explanations were of no avail. The almond-eyed creditors knew that the ship was gone, which implied that the government dues were paid. And

as the captain appeared with the ship's "papers" under his arm, he could now go to sea himself if he was dishonest enough to do so, and they believed that he was.

One angry Celestial after another thrust his bill into the captain's face and demanded pay. They followed him from one merchant's office to another, — a mob of panic-stricken creditors, — heralding this honest ship-master as a villain to all who would lend ear.

One dolorous creditor, more importunate than his fellows, so constantly thrust his trifling bill into Captain Baston's face that he became indignant, caught up the bill, tore it into a hundred pieces and threw the bits of paper to the wind, as he hurried along the street. The injured creditor disappeared from the crowd, uttering many imprecations in pigeon English against Baston.

An hour after, when Captain Baston returned, unsuccessful, to his consignee, the aggrieved Celestial was there with a sheriff, who, in his official capacity, presented the hundred pieces of torn bill, now gummed together in readable shape, and demanded immediate payment. A good laugh was had at the captain's expense, in which he could not help joining, at the ingenuity displayed. But when the true condition of affairs was explained to the officer he did not force a collection, but sent away his client, as well as all the other creditors, much to the relief of the persecuted Baston.

When he learned these circumstances Captain Lawrence expressed his warmest sympathy for his brother masters, and agreed to loan them all the money they required at twenty per cent. rate of exchange. The result was, that before night of the second day he succeeded in loaning two hundred and fifty thousand dollars on some of the most reliable ship-owners in America.

This was not pleasant news at the consulate, or for any of the financiers at Victoria, who had accumulated large sums of money to meet spring transactions, for they were likely to have their hoards left upon their hands. Lawrence had cut down the loan rates one hundred and fifty dollars on a thousand, and had further promised to keep his future rates five per cent. under those on shore, however much the shore rates might depreciate.

The most popular merchants and ship-chandlers then at Hong Kong were the American house of Rawl, Drinker & Co., a Philadelphia firm. Captain Drinker had been an old China captain, and was well liked by his brother masters. He kept open house for all masters doing business with the firm.

After some days Lawrence and the doctor became so feverish from their wounds that the naval surgeon insisted on their being taken ashore. The ship was given in charge of Braybrook, and the captain took rooms near other masters at the Drinker House. The residence was built upon the high stone battlement which there skirts the shore ; there were embra-

tures made for cannon in this massive sea-wall, in case of need in time of war. The sea-wall which overhangs the granite quays was so built that the captains could overlook their ships when anchored along the shore. They could also oversee the boats while landing cargo at the quay; and if required, hail the men when entering the portcullis beneath the ramparts.

Through the aid of Messrs. Rawl & Drinker, Lawrence obtained further exchange for over a million dollars more of his treasure. It was loaned at somewhat reduced rates to the merchants of Manila, Shanghai and Singapore. This, together with a loan of five hundred thousand dollars accomplished with Messrs. Russell & Sturgis of Canton, and the half million placed by the captain himself during the first days of his arrival, footed up something more than two millions of treasure already disposed of; and the captain felt sure that he should secure every new arrival in port, if the vessels required funds for repairs or purchases.

After some weeks' deliberation, and frequent advisement with the most sagacious China masters in port, Lawrence concluded to purchase a cargo of silks and teas for the home market; this promised to be even a better investment than the twenty per centum loans. In this way, nearly a million dollars more of the ship's massive hoard would be disposed of.

Having come to this conclusion, other matters of

importance confronted the captain. As the ship had been badly wrenched in every seam and timber-head when she was stoven by the breaching whale, it was deemed necessary to discharge the sperm oil and take ashore the remaining treasure to the bank. The carpenters and calkers could then have free sweep to repair the vessel and inspect her from keelson to planksheer.

Furthermore, as the oil had to be taken out of the ship and exposed to the sun, at the risk of leakage, it was thought best to freight it to England, where it would net £1 10s. per barrel more than in the home market. As a second-class ship lying in port — unsuited for a China cargo — was up for charter, Lawrence induced several other whalers to join him in securing the vessel and loading her for Liverpool. In this way the oil from the *Fleetwing* was transhipped to the “*Dreadnaught*,” without loss by leakage in landing, which had been quite a serious matter with Captain Marsh’s oil.

What remained of the treasure was sold to the Chinese goldsmiths, Ching Wong, of Canton, and the great firm of Ning Ray & Co. of Hong Kong. Both of these affluent merchants gave Lawrence their drafts on the Victoria bank. Thus all anxiety about the disposal of the *Fleetwing*’s bullion was happily ended, for the great English banking house was one of the safest known in foreign parts.

After the cargo had been discharged, the ship was towed into Mathewson’s shipyard and hauled out

upon the ways for a thorough calking and general repairs. Her stoven side had been repaired at the Isle of Palms with pine timbers hewn from spare spars; these were to be taken out and stouter timbers and planking put in.

While Dr. Greville and Princess Morete, with dear old Uncle Joe, — who officiated as head nurse to the wounded captain and doctor, — took rooms adjoining the captain's, Braybrook, Morey and the other officers and boatsteerers choose to stick by the ship. In this way the crew were kept together during repairs, living on board and having daily liberty on shore, one watch at a time.

Thus the ever-thoughtful Braybrook kept a general supervision over the seamen, as well as a sharp eye upon the work of the shipwrights. This personal interest saved some of the men from being robbed by the Jew traders ashore, and insured better work from the carpenters and calkers, the best of whom require looking after in a foreign port.

Before ending we ought, perhaps, to substantiate Captain Lawrence's financial ability by summing up his masterly management of the wrecked treasure and the cargo of oil. He finally succeeded in adding twenty-five per cent. to the original amount, making the sum of six and a half million dollars. This sum was subsequently divided among the crew and owners. All those belonging to the ship received an amount *pro rata*, according to their "lay." Captain Lawrence's fifteenth lay — or share in the proceeds

of the voyage—gave him the neat sum of four hundred and thirty thousand dollars, while Master Doughnut, the cabin-boy, with only the two hundredth lay, received three thousand dollars, which enabled the honest youth to buy and furnish a pretty house for his dear old mother at Sippican.

It was nearly three weeks after the Fleetwing's arrival at Hong Kong before Lawrence was able to take his first dinner on board the great ship of the line. The noble old admiral had continued very friendly with Lawrence, and took this occasion to invite aboard a large gathering of shore officials and notable friends. Among the guests was the governor, who deemed it an appropriate time to present the reward for Ching Along's head.

At Captain Lawrence's request, Mr. Bailey was permitted to be present during the post-prandial ceremony.

This concession from the admiral led the officers of the flag-ship to extend an invitation to Braybrook and Morey to dine in the ward-room, so that the Fleetwing's people were well represented. Dr. Greville was not able to be present, as he would not take Morete, though there was intense interest to see the pretty mermaid princess who had been so miraculously rescued from her insane condition by her now loving husband. Lady Seymore and a few other notable ladies were subsequently permitted to call upon the happy young wife at her rooms.

The great ship was decorated with flags and sur-

rounded with hundreds of shore craft and other ship's boats. The authorities arrived off in due time, and at gun-fire, after dinner, the presentation took place upon the poop-deck, in full view of the vast congregation in boats. The admiral had said in explanation at table that the governor wished to make the most of this heroic fight, as there was a growing inclination to shun such conflicts with the larger pirates, and they had grown over-bold therefrom.

Only the night before the Fleetwing's arrival a large merchant spice brig had been attacked, and returned to port after an absence of forty-eight hours. The captain, his wife, mate and third mate and all the English crew were murdered, and sixty thousand dollars in specie were stolen from the brig's run. Some of the pirates had shipped to the brig up at Wampoa; others boarded in boats during the night while the brig was anchored off Taitoo Island, waiting the turn of tide to go on her way to the Banda Sea.

The second mate of the brig had the watch on deck when the pirate crew attacked; he jumped over-board, swam under the counter and climbed into the rudder-chains, where he held on until the pirates found the specie and pulled away for the shore. He then climbed into one of the cabin windows, and with the aid of a few Malays, whom the murderers had spared, worked the brig back on the return tide to the anchorage at Hong Kong.

The governor made an appropriate address when

he presented the reward to Lawrence, and ended by saying :

“ Captain Lawrence, I here present you with the government reward which was appropriated for the head of the great mandarin pirate, Ching Along, the most daring freebooter ever commanding in these seas,” and he thereupon handed Lawrence a leather bag of gold.

Admiral Seymore then came to the front and took the matter in hand. He made an eloquent tribute, drawing attention to the many acts of personal bravery shown during the unequal fight on board the Flectwing, where every man seemed to have done some valorous deed worthy of all praise.

“ But, ladies and gentlemen,” continued Sir Michael, as he approached the blushing captain, “ I wish to draw especial notice to the unusual heroism of this young commander, — one of nature’s noblemen, — who, while prostrate and faint from an ugly wound, lodged twelve minie bullets in as many pirate hearts, and saved the day of battle by his personal bravery.

“ I further assert, gentlemen, that few of us, men of war as we are, could have accomplished such precise work in the tussle and confusion of a sea-fight. This wound-stricken man must have thought he was in the final ‘ death-swoon ’ when he showed such valor, — a sickening, deathly prostration that usually deprives a man of the last vestige of courage.

“ And now, sir, I tender you the personal thanks of

myself and the officers of the fleet, with this souvenir." And the noble descendant of the royal line of Seymores put a costly watch and chain into the captain's hand. "It is the best that the country affords, else our gift would have been more worthy of your acceptance. With this simple token, Captain, we beg you to accept the sincere esteem of men whose profession makes them the best judges of the difficult circumstances under which you have won your title to the nobility of heroism!"

A burst of applause rang out over the water, and rolled like a billow from ship to shore. That, with the prolonged cheers which came welling back from the housetops and the wharves, gave Lawrence the needed moment in which to recover from his pleasant surprise, and to seize upon some suitable words of response to the kind addresses of the governor and the admiral. With his heart almost too full for utterance, he replied :

"Your Excellency, and gentlemen of Hong Kong, who have so kindly bestowed this reward for a dead pirate, and my gracious host, — England's greatest living commander, — who has doubly increased the government reward by this sumptuous occasion made for presenting it, and to her Majesty's officers, whose gift I shall treasure to my latest day, to one and all I now render my heartfelt thanks.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, let me crave your attention in behalf of another, — the real hero of our pirate fight. Having obtained the private assurance

of his Excellency and the noble admiral that no offence would be taken, I hereby publicly declare in this presence, that — ‘Honor should be bestowed where honor is due!’

“Therefore, by the hand that was saved, I herewith bestow this reward into the hands which saved both me and mine, — our ship and our lives!

“Gentlemen, it was Uncle Joe Bailey who struck the one redeeming blow in that murderous fray; the noble old ‘avenger of the seas,’ the man who recently killed Mocha Dick, the most destructive sperm whale known among whalemén.”

At the close of Captain Lawrence’s speech Braybrook vainly endeavored to force Mr. Bailey forward to receive the gift. At length, when the old man saw that the captain was determined that he should receive the reward, he reluctantly went forward and took it. Advancing with his white head bowed on his chest, and hot tears streaming down his aged cheeks, he was visibly touched by this new kindness of his loved young captain, and when he recovered his voice, his words were to the point.

“Weel, Cap’n, I s’pose I mus’ tuk dis yere gole ‘cause yo’ wan ter hab me. Joe Bailey eber lubs ter do yer biddin’. But, sah, all de gole in creashun can’t hire dis chile ter kill ‘nother yaller niggar, ‘cept dey cum ‘board like dem yere varmint todder day. Genlems, I’ze ar Christi’n niggar; but I s’pose dis chile would spade de ole Eb’nezer hisself, ef de debble dar raise his cheese-knife ober my cap’n.

Leddies an' genlems, dis chile duzn't like ter kill eben dose yaller sinners, 'cause de bressed Lawd told us in de gude book, 'Joe, yo' mus'n't kill yer brudder man.' "

This show of affection for his young commander affected the admiral as upon a former occasion. He had often expressed his admiration for Uncle Joe's novel manner of beheading a pirate. When the admiral now clapped his hands, it was taken as a signal for all to applaud the speech of the old veteran, and a spontaneous cheer rang out over the ship. The governor, when made acquainted with Joe Bailey's history, came forward and shook him warmly by the hand, an example soon followed by many other distinguished persons on board.

Standing throughout the ceremony, together with the excitement arising out of such an occasion, caused Captain Lawrence to faint. The officers hastened to lay him in Sir Michael's reclining chair, which was wheeled under the quarter-deck awning for the purpose.

After quite a long swoon the captain was rallied. The deathly pallor which still lingered on his manly face continued to make him an object of interest to all. Several English ladies of rank were especially attracted by the sad condition of the young American, and openly expressed their admiration of his heroism, and showed true feminine sympathy for his wounded state.

This fortuitous incident was the source of many

subsequent invitations, which introduced Lawrence into some of the highest social and official circles among the rather exclusive society of Victoria.

The acquaintance of one noble lady, made at this time, happily influenced Lawrence's whole after-life. While he courteously received the vivacious greetings of all the fair assemblage of ladies in his usual quiet manner, it was remarked that when Lady Lucia Seymore was presented by the grand old earl, her father, the ghastly pallor went out of Lawrence's face so suddenly that the over-tasked carotids must have done some lively pumping.

And, strange to say, there were those present rude enough to remark that the charming face of the ardent young girl took on something of a kindred hue, though, possibly, it was only a momentary reflection from the captain's unusual crimson and bronze. Lawrence's mysterious flush was quickly renewed, a moment after, when the jolly old admiral came bustling among the ladies gathered about the captain's couch, calling out brusksly :

“Where's my niece? Who's seen Lady Lucia?—O ho, here you are. So, pretty dear, you got your papa to officiate in my stead. My friends, this young lady would hardly permit me to see the governor and party off before I came to introduce her to this—‘brave young captain,’ as she insists upon calling this noble American citizen.”

“But, uncle, you were so *very* long coming. And pa was just as impatient as I was. Now,

weren't you, papa?" and the winsome young creature caught the old earl by the hand, and almost induced England's ambassador to tell a whopper, to help out his adorable daughter.

"Yes, yes," continued Sir Michael in tormenting mood, "but I have eyes to see that this pretty minx has already stormed the fortress, spiked the guns, and taken full possession of the enemy's works, without requiring her old sailor-uncle to lift tack or sheet. Ah, Lucia, to think that I should ever be left in a 'lee-lurch' in this manner almost breaks my heart." And he magnanimously accepted her one little hand as a hostage, and ceased his untimely raillery, for the good reason that the other little hand was clapped over his mouth, and completely "barred down the hatches."

"I have to thank Lady Seymore for the interest she is pleased to attest in my affairs," said Lawrence, gallantly coming to the blushing Lucia's relief. "Besides, by your delay, Admiral, I have also had the honor of making the earl's acquaintance."

"Ah, that don't go for much, Captain, where there's a young lady of this pattern in the case. Ha, my Lord George?" — appealing to Lord Seymore, who laughed heartily at the old sailor's bantering.

"I believe you are a good judge, Seymore, of wind, weather, and the ladies, for I can vouch for your having been flirting with the whole three elements all your lifetime. But, Captain Lawrence, to be serious for a moment, — if my brother will

permit, — I am truly glad that my sailing was delayed a few weeks, now we have met you.

“Sir Michael has greatly interested us by his glowing account of your heroic doings, and now that I have seen the man, I can the more readily believe the admiral’s eulogium. Captain, we have a reception at the embassy two weeks from to-night, and sail for England on the following day. It will be an informal affair, and the only occasion to continue our acquaintance I may have to offer, as I am going back and forth to and from Canton.”

“As a further incentive to your coming, Captain,” interposed Lady Lucia, “perhaps pa will give you a peep at Uncle Seymore’s despatches to the Lord High Admiral about your knightly deeds.” Lawrence bowed with a sense of supreme satisfaction, while the beautiful girl exchanged sly looks with her uncle, — one of her many bewitching ways of soliciting his sanction.

“Thanks, my lord, for this kindness to a stranger. If I find myself sufficiently convalesced at the time I will gladly accept your invitation. Lest I may not be in condition to be present then, I will now wish you and Lady Lucia a pleasant homeward voyage, with less trouble in leaving port than I had in coming in.”

Lawrence’s allusion to his own unpleasant affair made Lady Lucia’s flushed cheeks blanch to marble paleness; and as she gave the captain her hand at parting, she replied with a delicious tremor in her voice :

“Oh, Captain, if we should meet those horrible creatures, I’m sure we should wish for you and your black Knight of Spades to ‘repel boarders,’ as Uncle Seymore tells about.”

For one precious moment, while thus talking and taking leave of the wounded hero, Lady Lucia’s glorious blue-gray orbs dwelt earnestly upon Lawrence’s manly face, held fast by his own tender and magnetic gaze. So frequently had the sympathetic girl listened to the admiral’s enthusiastic story of the young American’s heroism, that her interest had imperceptibly changed to admiration, until love had at length unconsciously instilled its subtle influence into her maiden heart, and when she finally met the object of her solicitude, she unwittingly disclosed her glowing feelings in her blushing face and tell-tale eyes.

As we have seen, Lawrence was amazed and delighted with the brightness and beauty of the high-born girl. And no wonder that the warmth of her greeting, — while expressing compassion for his sufferings, — and the ardent, unquailing tenderness of her eyes, should win his sailor heart in a twinkling.

Thus they parted, each having photographed upon the heart of the other an indelible image, nevermore to be effaced. A picture of nobleness and beauty on the one hand, and of chivalrous manhood on the other, — images that must continue to tattle sweetly of the absent one unto the remotest hour of existence.

Here we take leave of the noble Fleetwing, and her sorely tried, but fortunate crew and commander ; leave them until some future time, for there are numerous other adventures of thrilling interest to commemorate about Captain Lawrence's homeward voyage — themes of sufficient length and importance to elaborate by themselves.

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